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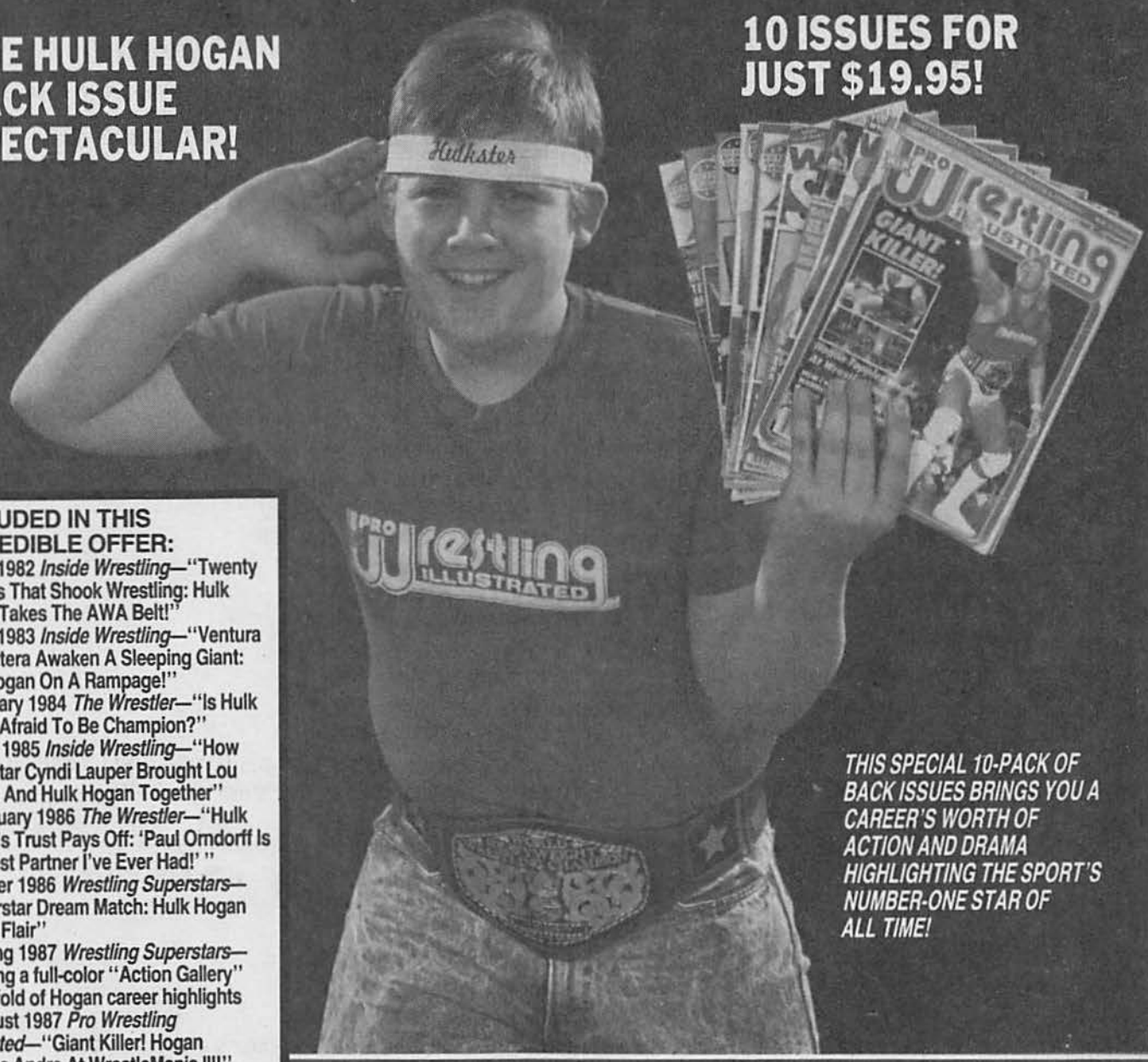

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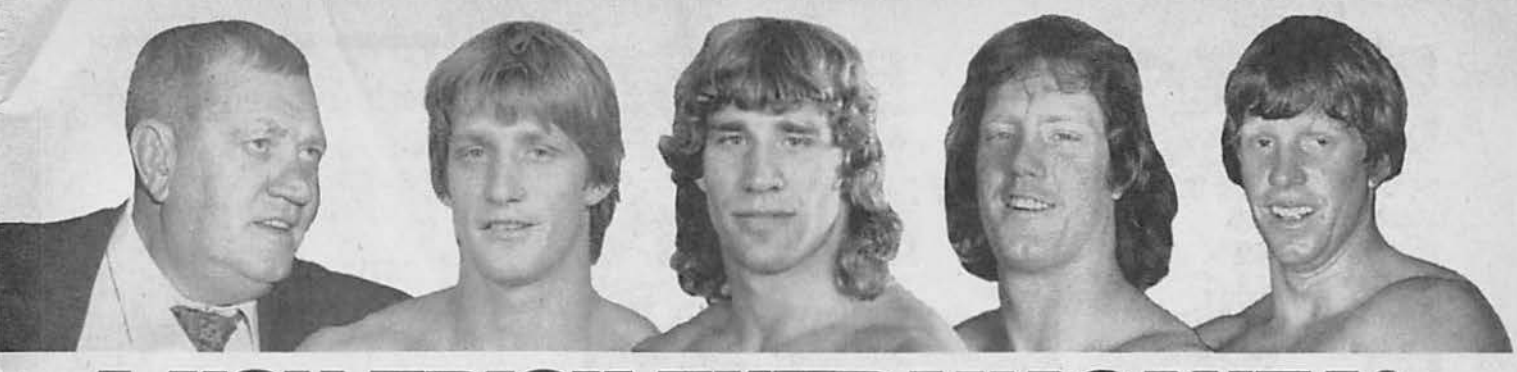

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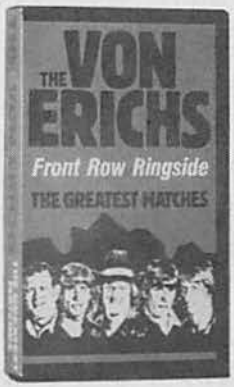

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THE DOOR IS SPINNING

Nice job on that December cover, boys! You guys really hit the nail on the head by virtually predicting the demise of that elite group of bloodworms known as The Four Horsemen.

I loved your article. The Horsemen are, and always have been, scumbuckets. Your article did a great job summing up their acts of violence and other atrocities. But then you went one further.

You guys accurately predicted that the Horsemen would, as you put it, "simply self-destruct." The departure of both Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson is certainly a step in that direction.

Thanks for a great article. I'm sure all of us who hate the Horsemen enjoyed it thoroughly. And I'll bet that even those jerks who like the Horsemen had to admit after reading your story that their once-solid group is on shaky, shaky ground. Thanks again.

LAURA ALCOTT
Talbott, TN

WHY BIGELOW LEFT THE WWF
FULL-COLOR PINUP OF HACKSAW DUGGAN
PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
THE FOUR HORSEMEN'S REVOLVING DOOR—
WHO'S THE NEXT TO GO?

I am writing to condemn your December 1988 cover story "The Four Horsemen's Revolving Door—Who's The Next To Go?" for its obviously slanted tone. This article was definitely written by someone who was never a big fan of the most elite group in the history of wrestling, The Four Horsemen.

Now, the Horsemen are no more. Sure, your headline was proven prophetic, but your article still reeks of bias. Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson were great champions and great Horsemen. Your article scorned the Horsemen because they refused to pander to the fans. So what if they are rulebreakers? I know of no wrestler who *doesn't* break the rules. If you can show me someone who *never* breaks the rules (especially in tag teaming), I will eat these words, this letter, or an entire issue of your biased magazine!

The only thing about the Horsemen issue I *would* like to compliment is the cover. To me, this is the ultimate final portrait of the Horsemen: Barry Windham, the newcomer, surly as ever; Tully and Arn, viciously contemplating their next move; "Nature Boy" Ric Flair, bedecked in his elaborate robe; and J.J. Dillion, white hair and obvious erudition shining under the photographer's lights.

Anyone who dislikes the Horsemen—including the writer of that article—should occasionally glance at that portrait and notice its most important facet: there's gold everywhere! This was, indeed, an elite group. I will surely miss them. And when you think about it, even those that hated the Horsemen will miss them, too.

ANDI LANOUX
St. Paul

BAM BAM'S BIGGEST FAN

There's a refreshing change brewing on the horizon of wrestling nowadays and I think Bam Bam Bigelow is sitting pretty in the eye of the storm.

I'm from Chicago, and yesterday, when I was watching the NWA on TV here, I saw that Bigelow had finally moved to the NWA, the finest wrestling federation around. Bigelow is a wrestler with tremendous potential that was wasted in the WWF.

Then, later on in the evening, I attended a card of Windy City Wrestling. This is one of my favorite independent promotions. To my surprise, Bigelow was there, wrestling with Paul E. Dangerously as his manager. From what I heard, he had to make good on some contractual agreements he made with Dangerously.

Even though he wrestled as a rulebreaker, I enjoyed his presence immensely. I hope that wrestling is moving toward the day when the big stars are independent of federations and styles. If

Bam Bam wrestles in the WWF as a fan favorite and then in Chicago as a rulebreaker, that's fine with me.

I think Bam Bam will have great success in the NWA. He really is the Beast From The East!

LISA KRAUSE
Chicago, IL

ANDRE THE GREAT

I'm writing this letter to tell you people about something that bothers me. Every time I watch WWF wrestling, Andre the Giant is booed. I understand that he is a hated wrestler, but how can you boo a man who has not been defeated in 24 years? (I don't count the time Hulk Hogan and referee Joey Marella cheated.)

Andre the Giant grabs Kamala around the throat before kicking him. Andy Abrahamson thinks Andre is a true legend.

He has beaten such men as seven-time NWA champion Harley Race, the sadistic Kamala, the powerful King Kong Bundy, "Rowdy" Roddy Piper, and even that pathetic has-been Hulk Hogan. He has been WWF World champion (by pinning Hulk Hogan fair and square) and destroyed Hogan three times in 1980 (twice at Madison Square Garden and once at Shea Stadium).

I think the people who boo this living legend (apologies to Bruno Sammartino) must be sick individuals. You better get used to the Giant, because before long, he'll be champion of the world again!

ANDY ABRAHAMSON
Kenosha, WI

TO SKIN A FOX

I am writing in response to Mr. Doug Fox of Atlanta who, in the December 1988 "Between Falls," characterized Sting as "nothing more than a flash-in-the-pan grappler" who needs to learn a lot more about the sport of wrestling. Fox said that Sting "represents the young wrestling fans who have no sense of history."

Granted, I'm only 15 years old, but I'm Sting's number-one fan. Fox says that Sting's fans have no sense of history. If that's true, how come every time I go to the matches, *everyone* from age five to 75 hoots and hollers for Sting? Why? Because Sting is the best wrestler these people have ever seen! And these are not "flash-in-the-pan" fans, Mr. Fox. Many of them are longtime fans who *know* about Harley Race (your personal

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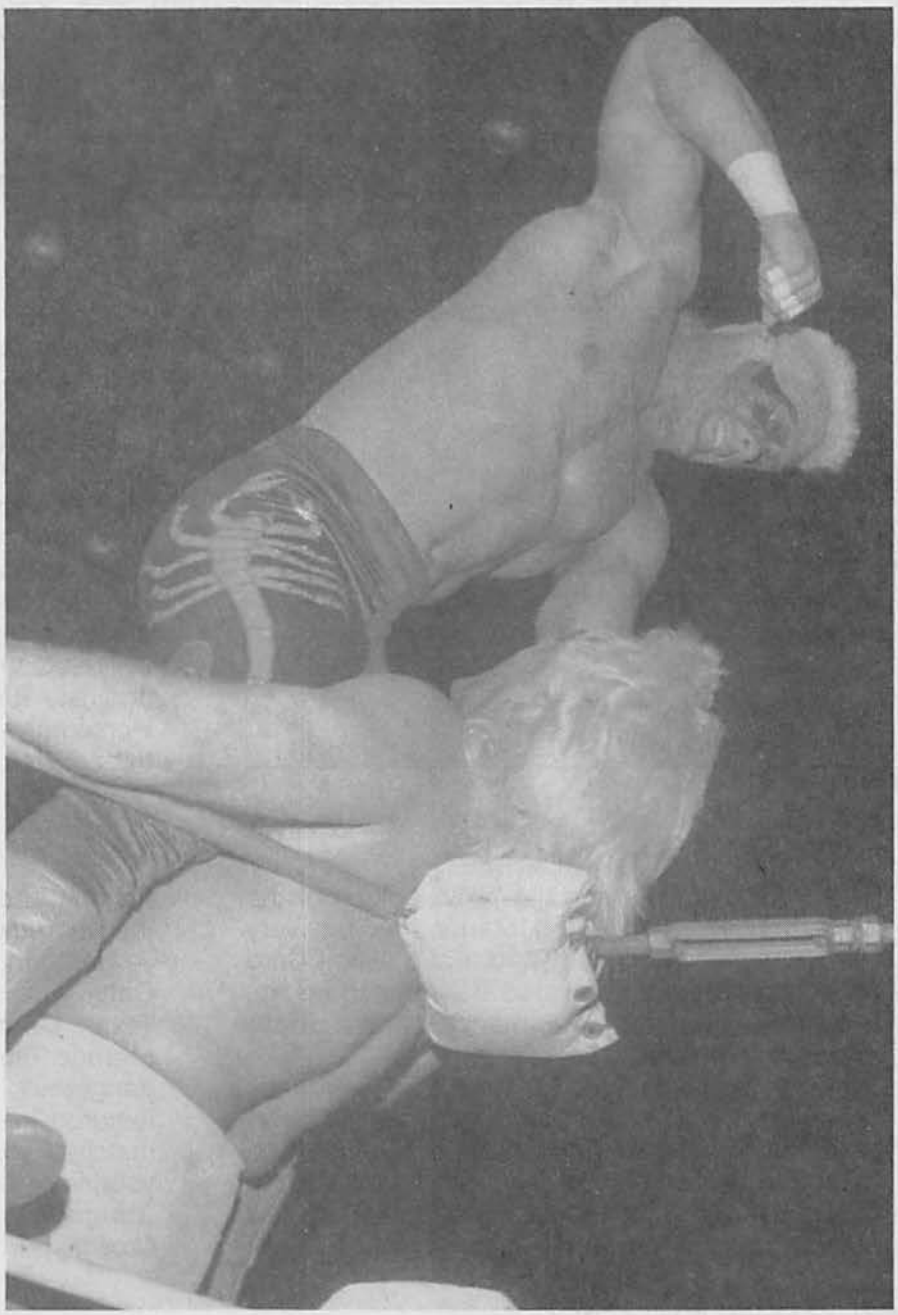

Sting hammers away at NWA World champion Ric Flair. Reader Kevin Berry writes that Sting will certainly win a world title of his own someday because he is the best wrestler in the world, an opinion shared by thousands of fans.

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RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

THE CWF HEAVYWEIGHT title, vacant since last April, was finally filled on October 3 when **Tom Prichard** defeated **Tony Anthony** in the final round of the "Road to Birmingham" tournament at Boutwell Auditorium in Birmingham, Alabama.

"I am the champion!" Prichard howled excitedly while fellow wrestlers congratulated him. "And that makes me happy not just for myself, but for the fans, too. Now the fans have a champion they can be proud of. I don't know what I would've done if 'Dirty White Boy' won the belt."

Tom Prichard is the new CWF heavyweight champion after winning the "Road to Birmingham" tournament in Alabama.

He almost did. The final match of this one-night tournament degenerated into an all-out brawl when **Jerry Stubbs** ran into the ring and knocked out Prichard with a pair of brass knuckles. "Nightmare" **Dan Davis** then charged the ring, attacked Stubbs, and hit Anthony before referee **Ron Fuller** finally restored order. Then Prichard took control. He launched an all-out assault that caught Anthony totally off-guard, finally scoring the pin at six minutes.

Prichard had reached the finals by defeating **Samoan Kokina** at 3:26 in round one, and Stubbs at 4:52 of the semifinal following a second-round bye. "Dirty White Boy" needed only 41 seconds to defeat **The Bullet** in the first round, then used his cat-o'-nine-tails to pin **Dutch Mantel** in the second round. White Boy received a semifinal bye.

Eddie Gilbert had boasted he would emerge victorious in the tournament, but left the Continental area several days earlier, along with wife **Missy Hyatt** and manager **Paul E. Dangerously**. At press time, Gilbert was expected to sign with the NWA.

Former Intercontinental and U.S. champ **Rick Steamboat** is negotiating with NWA officials for a possible return. No further details were available at press time . . . **Chavo Guerrero** won the All-California Championship Wrestling title from **Jack Armstrong** . . . **Peter Maivia Jr.** and **Mando Guerrero** defeated **The Lords of Discipline** for the ACCW tag belts . . . **Learning The Ropes**, the syndicated sitcom starring **Lyle Alzado** and featuring stars from the NWA, premiered nationally on October 8.

Rick "The Dragon" Steamboat may soon be returning to the NWA, site of many of his greatest matches including several classic NWA title bouts against Ric Flair.

How long will **The Varsity Club** remain in its present form? Over the past few weeks, rumors have circulated that **Kevin Sullivan** is looking for new members and has scouted **Dick Murdoch**, **Steve Williams**, and **Ron Simmons**. Meanwhile, current members **Mike Rotundo** and **Rick Steiner** don't seem to be getting along. When Steiner successfully defended Rotundo's TV belt against **The Italian Stallion**, Steiner wasn't even allowed to hold the belt. And Sullivan and Rotundo have reprimanded Steiner several times on television. Steiner, on the other hand, continues to insist that he can beat Rotundo. Here's a feud just waiting to happen.

And what's going on with **The**

(Continued on page 60)

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from the desk of. . .

Stuart M. Saks

Remember a few months back, when The Four Horsemen were at their vicious best? Dusty Rhodes came up with what he thought was a solution. "I am forming my *own* Four Horsemen," Dusty proclaimed.

In stating his intentions, Dusty neglected one important factor. He made the announcement before he recruited the three men he needed to join his crusade. When questioned about his failed plan, "The American Dream" just shrugs his shoulders and says, "Well, I guess I kind of spoke before I should've. I had a little trouble gathering the forces."

You mean, Dusty, that among Sting, Lex Luger, Steve Williams, Nikita Koloff, Jimmy Garvin, and The Fantastics, you couldn't recruit three men for such a worthy cause?

Rhodes stammers: "Well, uh, ya know, all the boys kinda had commitments at that time. But, uh, I'm sure that if I gave them a little more notice, uh, they woulda been right there with me."

But they weren't. They each had their own thing to do, their own title to shoot for, their own feud to settle. Meeting the Horsemen four on four was a splendid idea, they all told Dusty, but the timing was wrong.

Sorry, Dust.

That was it. Here was a man who had lent his life to an ideal, who had for years risked personal injury and forsaken personal glory to reach that ideal. The sport of professional wrestling was more important than the success of any one man, and he could not live with the notion that men like Ric Flair and Barry Windham and Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson were using an unfair numbers advantage and a total disregard for common decency to control an entire federation.

The solution, as he saw it, was to gather the opposing forces and battle them on their own terms. But even Dusty, as respected as he is, could not accomplish what he assumed would be the easiest part of the mission. What Rhodes learned, and what is becoming clearer and clearer as the months pass, is that there is no unity among the fan favorites in the NWA.

Simply put, each of the younger generation NWA superstars sees himself as the top fan favorite in the territory. He sees the potential for riches and adulation and doesn't want to spread the wealth. Selfishness. It's the mark of the '80s. It's the essence of the yuppie mentality. And, despite their lack of Gucci leathers and Armani suits, these men *are* yuppies.

They're not bad people, not at all. They just have a different set of

(Continued on page 54)

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IN FOCUS

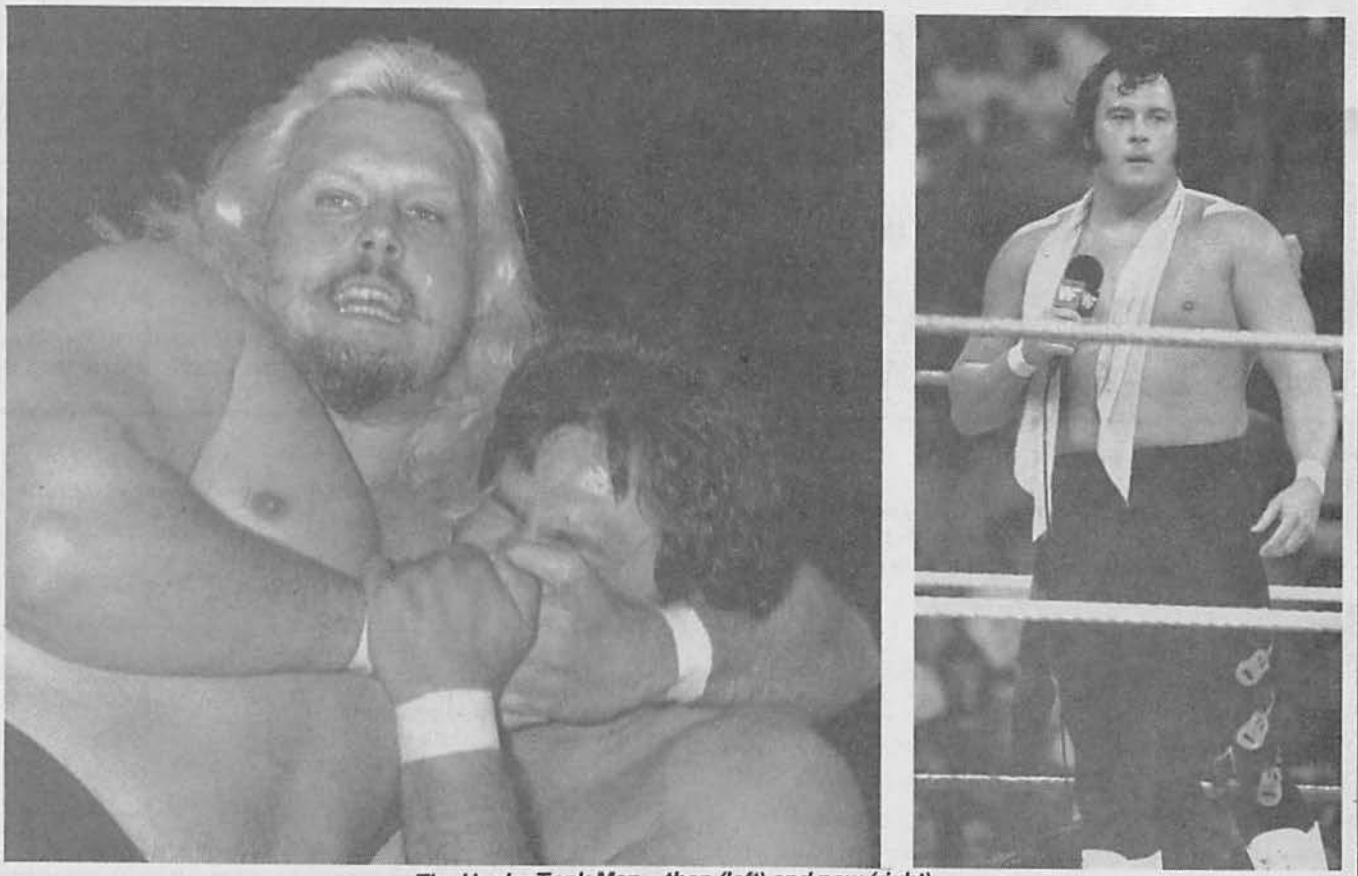
With CRAIG PETERS

PHOTO CONTEST WINNER REVEALED

Back in the December 1988 installment of "In Focus," I asked readers to identify the mystery wrestler headlocking Chavo Guerrero. I thought that a few people might be able to get the answer, but I never anticipated the flood of correct answers that arrived soon after that magazine went on sale.

The answer, as you can tell by the accompanying photos, is, of course, The Honky Tonk Man.

The more than 2,000 correct answers I received all went into a box, and the winner of a free *PWI* T-shirt—selected at random—is nine-year-old Kimberly Angle of Westernport, Maryland. Congratulations, Kimberly, and thanks to everyone who participated in the contest.



The Honky Tonk Man—then (left) and now (right)

HANDS OF STONE, FEET OF CLAY

So Ronnie Garvin, as well trained in the sport of boxing as he is in the art of professional wrestling, ambushes Dusty Rhodes with a closed fist, accepts a hefty payoff (said to be well into six figures) from J.J. Dillon, and hightails it out of the NWA in favor of a stint in the AWA (like a crafty boxer: stick and move). Before you know it, Garvin's downed Greg Gagne for the AWA TV title, and the wrestling world is hailing a new champion.

I think it stinks.

It stinks because Garvin's mere presence in the AWA is the ultimate degradation of a man who, until about six months ago, was one of the most honorable individuals the sport has ever had the privilege to host.

I remember having dinner with Garvin a few years ago, back when Atlanta meant Georgia Championship Wrestling, not a battleground for WWF vs. NWA once a month in The Omni. Garvin was Georgia National champion, and he spoke wistfully of the many years he'd spent in the sport. Some called him a journeyman, and Garvin didn't get upset by the term. He looked to the future, not to the past, and dreamed about the NWA World title he desired so much—a title he would ultimately win from Ric Flair and hold for two months in late 1987.

Ronnie Garvin

Ripped apart by post-title depressions, Garvin went for the quick payoff from Dillon—then fled from the NWA before facing the consequences of his actions. And that was the most cowardly act of all. Garvin's acceptance of Dillon's payoff is debatable, but his fleeing in the face of imminent retribution from Rhodes and his friends in an undeniable act of cowardice.

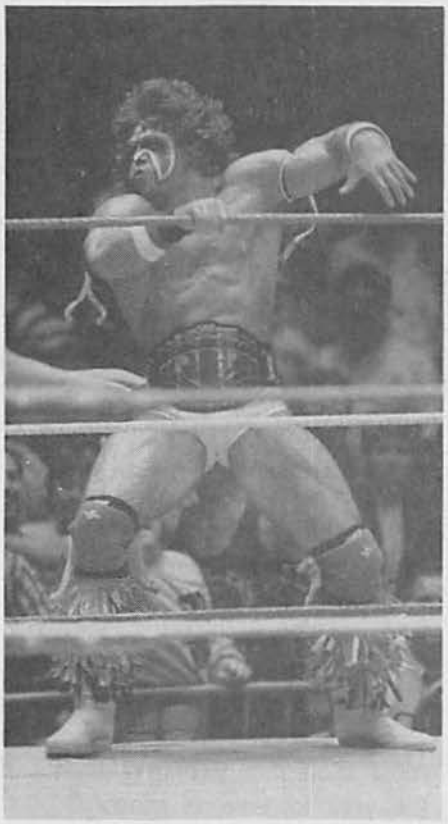
I'm afraid that the man with the hands of stone has developed a spine of jelly.

THE WARRIOR-HOGAN CONNECTION

As the wrestling world continues to hail The Ultimate Warrior's record-shattering 31-second WWF Intercontinental title victory over The Honky Tonk Man, I'm struck with the fact that the more I see Ultimate wrestle, the more I see Hulk Hogan.

Hogan built his worldwide reputation on pure charisma and the forceful execution of a few key wrestling maneuvers: the legdrop and the clothesline. It didn't matter—not to legions of Hulkamaniacs, anyway—that Hogan could barely execute a spinning toehold if he wanted, or that he probably didn't even *know* what a double-underhook suplex was. Hogan was Hogan, and that was all that mattered. Muscle, drive, forcefulness, enthusiasm—those are the bricks in the foundation of Hogan's legend.

Ultimate Warrior has studied that legend well. He's as one-dimensional a wrestler as Hogan is, favoring muscle, clotheslines, and a big splash in place of the legdrop. Ultimate's best move is the same as Hogan's: his ring entrance. It is undeniably electric. Like Hogan, Warrior strikes a fearsome physical presence in the ring.



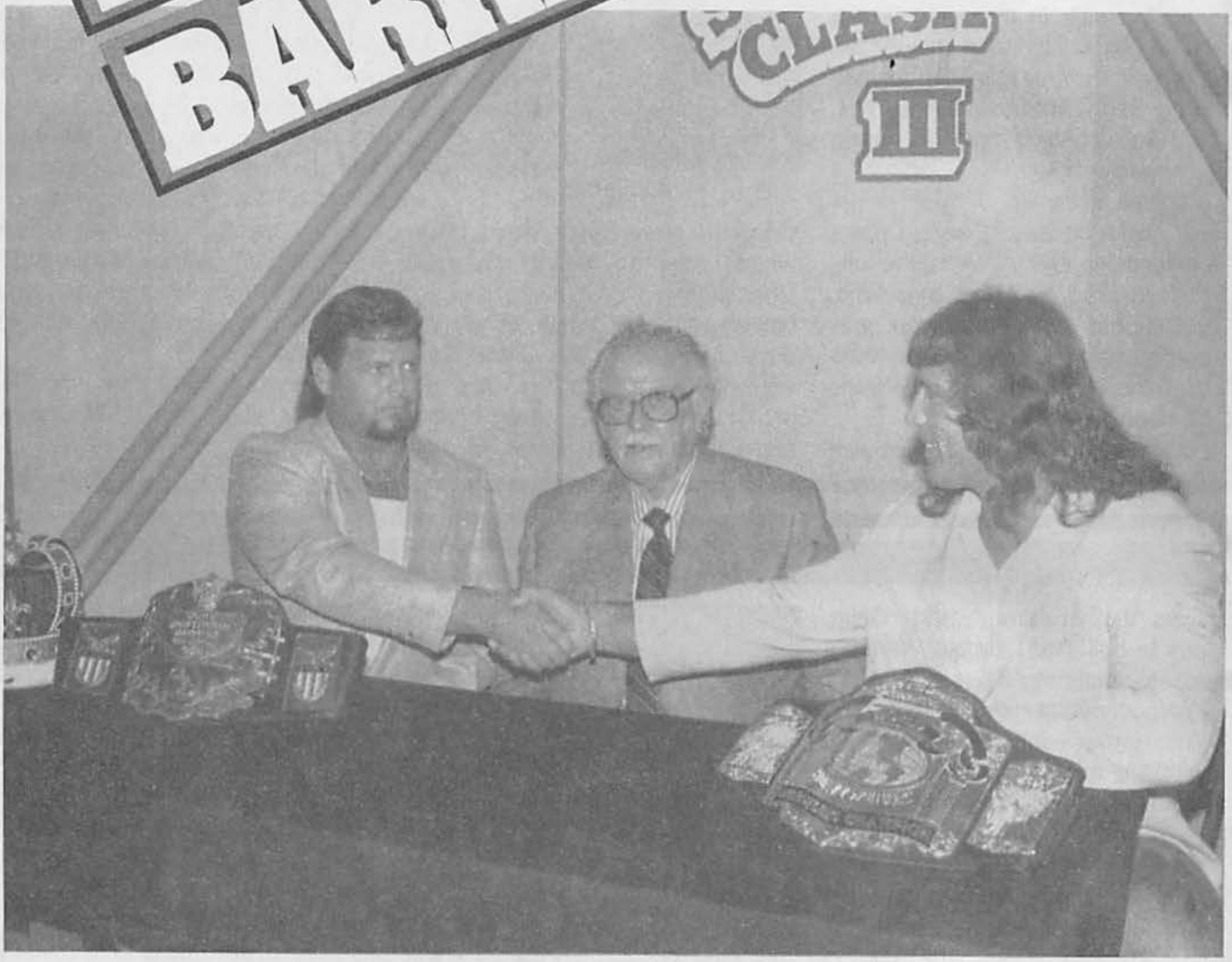
The Ultimate Warrior

Indeed, the Warrior may be just the first of an entire new generation of grapplers, a portent of massively muscular things to come. He has studied the Hogan legend, and adopted entire chunks of it to his own ring presence and style. Thus far it's been successful. But there's one important question left to be answered:

Will fans accept Ultimate's one-dimensionality wholesale, or will they tire of this second coming of Hogan as quickly as the Warrior rose to the I-C throne? □

NO HOLDS BARRED

with David Rosenbaum



AWA World champion Jerry Lawler and World Class champion Kerry Von Erich agree to put their respective titles on the line at SuperClash III, the joint AWA-World Class-CWA pay-per-view event scheduled for December 13 in Chicago. AWA head Stanley Blackburn presides over the signing.

JUST FOR GOOD measure, there should have been two empty chairs on hand when SuperClash III was announced on the AWA's ESPN program in early October, but the implication was obvious enough. To use a 1988 presidential campaign theme: When representatives from the AWA, World Class, CWA, and POWW got together for the big announcement, where were Jim and Vince?

Despite the absence of WWF and NWA talent, however, SuperClash III, scheduled for December 13 at the UIC Pavillion in Chicago, figures to be one of the most interesting wrestling events of the year for several reasons:

- It will mark the first time so many federations put their resources together for one big show.
- AWA World champion Jerry Lawler will battle World Class champ Kerry Von Erich in a title-unification showdown where there *must* be a winner.
- It should be interesting to see whether the event can be successful; this will be the first time anybody besides the WWF or

(Continued on page 56)

Inside Wrestling

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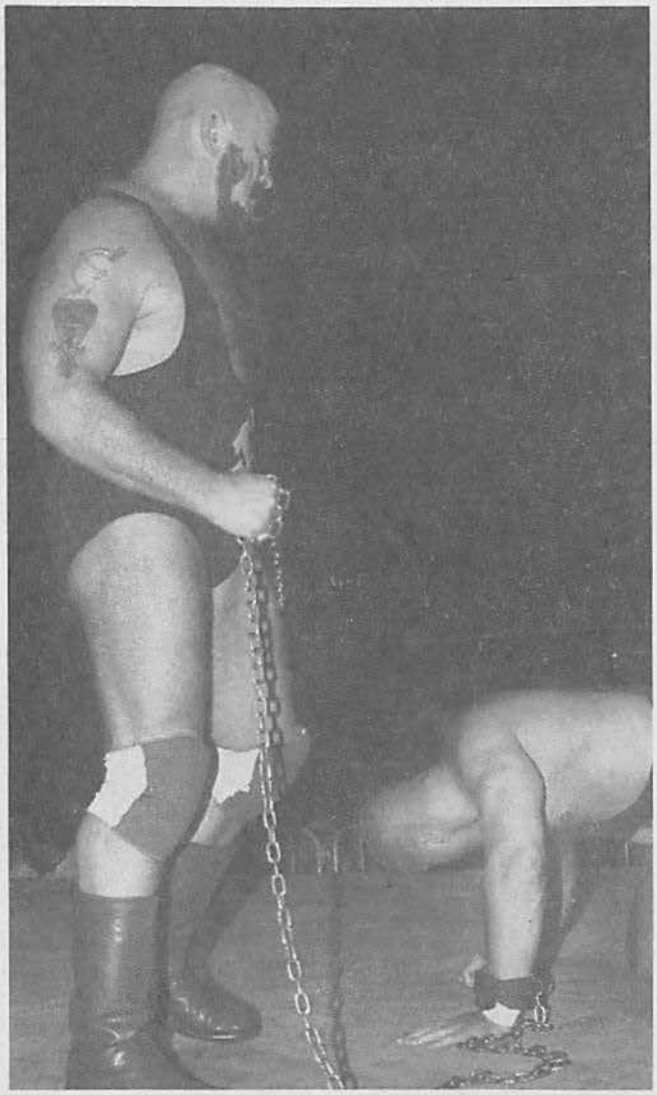
LOOKING AT...

Matt Brock:



Ivan Koloff has the advantage on his nephew Nikita Koloff during a chain match. Matt Brock hopes more people will see Ivan's good side now that "The Russian Bear" is teaming with Nikita.

IF YOU TURN to page 70 in this issue, you'll see a rare example of fan prejudice. This month's *"PWI* Poll" features reaction to the re-unification of Ivan and Nikita Koloff. While a whopping 77 percent of those polled believed that Ivan could trust Nikita, 68 percent said that Nikita could not trust Ivan. Sounds like the old double-standard to me.

I've known Ivan Koloff for decades. I've been to his home. I've watched how fans deride him for the simple reason that he's a Soviet citizen. It was easy for his nephew Nikita to win the fans' support: All he had to do was reject the Soviet way of life.

But Ivan didn't want to give up the only life he'd ever known just to be a fan favorite. His integrity, and his genuine love for Mother Russia, prevented him from doing that.

"Love for Mother Russia?" some may scoff. "How can he love such a terrible place?" Arrogance may not have always been a cornerstone of the American way of life, but it's starting to get there. Russia's no worse a place than New Jersey!

I was pounding the journalistic typewriter during one of the darkest periods in U.S.-Soviet relations. The "Cold War" it was called, and regardless of the strides both countries have made toward normalization, hostile winds still blow between our two countries. And Americans think that life in Russia is the most depressing thing imaginable.

You know what? The people over there think the same about us.

That's why it's always bothered me when people rejected Ivan simply because he was from the Soviet Union. Just because that country is an ideological adversary of ours doesn't mean for one second that its people deserve

IVAN KOLOFF

our scorn.

Like I said, I've been to Moscow. I spent two of the most uncomfortable weeks in my entire life there. The food is cold, the beverages are warm, and the humidity is unbearable. People stand on line for everything from cucumbers to vodka. Now, I've had to wait a few minutes for my favorite bar stool on a busy Friday night, but lining up for cucumbers is something I simply will not do.

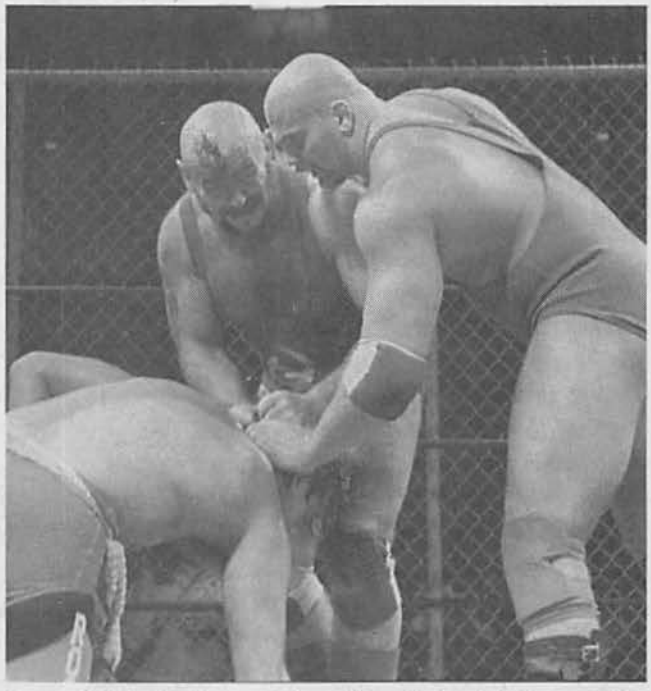
No question, life is hard in the Soviet Union. There are none of the conveniences we've come to take for granted. No air conditioning, no cable television, no abundance of fresh food. Yet, through it all, the human spirit triumphs. These people are not any kind of huddled gray mass—they're people, just like you and me, with noble spirit, great wit, intense passions, and genuine affection.

Ivan Koloff is a prime example of uncrushable human spirit. Sure, a lot of people never see anything but the "Cold War" side of Ivan. I wish they'd dig deeper. Ivan Koloff *has* a heart, he just hides it because he doesn't want to appear weak.

Perhaps this column will help illuminate things. I remember once leaving Madison Square Garden with Ivan after a characteristically brutal match. As we left, the fans who recognized "The Russian Bear" immediately began throwing programs and other debris at him. The trash bounced off Ivan, his face emotionless, hardened by years of such treatment.

As we got farther from the Garden, the number of pedestrians who recognized the mat warrior decreased. By the time we arrived at his hotel (some 40 blocks from the Garden), Ivan was just like any tourist in New York.

Suddenly, two cars collided in front of the hotel. There were minor injuries to the drivers, but a young child had become pinned between the two cars.



Ivan and Nikita double-team Robert Gibson during their days as NWA World tag team champions. Brock thinks that Ivan should not be condemned solely because he is a native of the Soviet Union.

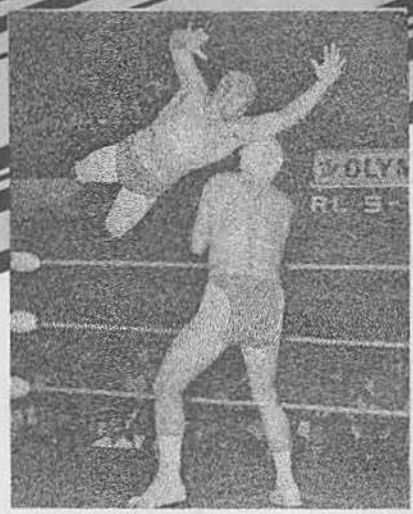
Seeing that the child was seriously wounded, Ivan rushed to curbside to lend assistance. He was the first man to offer help. First, summoning strength I had not believed possible, Ivan pushed aside one of the cars. Then he scooped up the child, asked an onlooker where the nearest hospital was, and took off.

The next time I saw Ivan, he was again being berated by fans. He treated them coldly, but I saw him differently.

I knew that even "The Russian Bear," one of the most hated wrestlers of all time, has a heart as big as his homeland. □

BY EDDIE ELLNER

off the Top Rope



If you wish to contribute to Ellner's mailbag, send your letters to:

TOP ROPE, Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571

[Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Eddie Ellner himself. They do not necessarily represent the editorial views of this magazine.]

THE WINNING ENTRY to the greatest moment in wrestling history contest, conducted in my Inside Wrestling "Insider" column, was submitted by Romeyn E. Tobin. It described the match in which Superstar Graham defeated Bruno Sammartino. Graham's ascension to the WWF throne, according to Romeyn, set into motion the era of the champion as muscleman and showman, an era from which we've yet to recover. The point, however, is not about Romeyn's entry (which failed to include an address), it's about participation. The contest proved conclusively the literacy of this column's readership. Have you people been going to night school? It was a pleasure reading each entry, even the one that claimed wrestling's greatest moment occurred when Robert Gibson and Rick Morton decided to unite as a tag team.

•

The torch has been passed . . . or is it the maple syrup? Dustin Rhodes, misbegotten offspring of Dusty Rhodes, made his pro wrestling debut last month in Tampa. Having not seen the match, I must resist the overwhelming temptation to comment upon it. I will say this: If Dustin is half the man his father is, he should go on a diet.

To the mails!

Terry Taylor may be a better wrestler than Sam Houston, but I still have a lot of questions about his character. Taylor could become a great one, but he could also slip into the mediocrity that has victimized more talented men.

Dear Mr. Ellner,

Terry Taylor's move to the WWF is the worst mistake of his career. Though he is a fine wrestler, he lacks the skill to unseat Randy Savage. Also, with rulebreaking Intercontinental and tag team champions, there is little chance of him winning any titles. I would suggest a move back to the World Class area, or perhaps the AWA, where he would have a better chance of beating Kerry Von Erich or Jerry Lawler.

THOMAS WANDER
Warren, OH

Dear Tommy,

I would suggest Taylor move to P.S. #5, my old elementary school in Cedarhurst, New York. There Taylor

(Continued on page 58)

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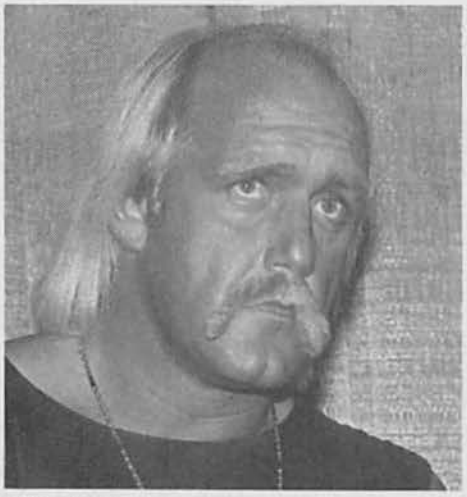
PWI's TOP 10



Hulk Hogan

TOP 10

1. **RANDY SAVAGE**
   245, Sarasota, FL
   WWF World champion
2. **RIC FLAIR**
   243, Minneapolis, MN
   NWA World champion
3. **JERRY LAWLER**
   234, Memphis, TN
   AWA World champion
4. **LEX LUGER**
   268, Chicago, IL
   No. 2 contender: NWA title
5. **KERRY VON ERICH**
   260, Denton, TX
   World Class champion
6. **TED DiBIASE**
   247, Omaha, NB
   No. 2 contender: WWF title
7. **BARRY WINDHAM**
   263, Sweetwater, TX
   U.S. heavyweight champion
8. **STING**
   260, Venice Beach, CA
   No. 3 contender: NWA title
9. **HULK HOGAN**
   302, Venice Beach, CA
   No. 3 contender: WWF title
10. **THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
    280, Queens, NY
    WWF Intercontinental champion

TAG TEAMS

1. **THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS**
   Combined weight: 453 pounds
   NWA World tag team champions
2. **DEMOLITION**
   Combined weight: 585 pounds
   WWF World tag team champions
3. **THE ROAD WARRIORS**
   Combined weight: 567 pounds
   No. 1 contenders: NWA tag team title
4. **PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND**
   Combined weight: 456 pounds
   AWA World tag team champions
5. **THE FANTASTICS**
   Combined weight: 462 pounds
   No. 1 contenders: U.S. tag team title
6. **THE BRITISH BULLDOGS**
   Combined weight: 461 pounds
   No. 1 contenders: WWF tag team title
7. **THE HART FOUNDATION**
   Combined weight: 515 pounds
   No. 2 contenders: WWF tag team title
8. **JACQUES & RAYMOND ROUGEAU**
   Combined weight: 490 pounds
   No. 3 contenders: WWF tag team title
9. **THE SAMOAN SWAT TEAM**
   Combined weight: 510 pounds
   World Class and Texas tag team champions
10. **THE ROCK 'N' ROLL RPMs**
    Combined weight: 472 pounds
    CWA tag team champions

NWA

World Champion:
RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN

1—**BARRY WINDHAM**, *263, Sweetwater, TX*
2—**LEX LUGER**, *268, Chicago, IL*
3—**STING**, *260, Venice Beach, CA*
4—**DUSTY RHODES**, *302, Austin, TX*
5—**STEVE WILLIAMS**, *265, Norman, OK*
6—**NIKITA KOLOFF**, *275, Moscow, Russia*
7—**MIKE ROTUNDO**, *245, Syracuse, NY*
8—**RICK STEINER**, *248, Detroit, MI*
9—**AL PEREZ**, *238, Tampa, FL*
10—**RON SIMMONS**, *260, Perry, GA*

WWF

World Champion:
RANDY SAVAGE
245, Sarasota, FL

1—**THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**, *280, Queens, NY*
2—**ANDRE THE GIANT**, *497, Grenoble, France*
3—**HULK HOGAN**, *302, Venice Beach, CA*
4—**TED DiBIASE**, *247, Omaha, NB*
5—**BAD NEWS BROWN**, *280, New York, NY*
6—**KING HAKU**, *274, Tonga*
7—**THE HONKY TONK MAN**, *255, Memphis, TN*
8—**JAKE ROBERTS**, *246, Stone Mountain, GA*
9—**BRUTUS BEEFCAKE**, *273, San Francisco, CA*
10—**RICK RUDE**, *246, Robbinsdale, MN*

AWA

World Champion:
JERRY LAWLER
234, Memphis, TN

1—**RONNIE GARVIN**, *231, Montreal, Quebec*
2—**KERRY VON ERICH**, *260, Denton, TX*
3—**GREG GAGNE**, *220, Robbinsdale, MN*
4—**WAHOO McDANIEL**, *280, Midland, TX*
5—**MANNY FERNANDEZ**, *245, El Paso, TX*
6—**COL. DeBEERS**, *248, Cape Town, South Africa*
7—**SGT. SLAUGHTER**, *310, Parris Island, SC*
8—**SOLDAT USTINOV**, *265, Moscow, Russia*
9—**MANDO GUERRERO**, *225, Mexico City, Mexico*
10—**TEIJHO KHAN**, *265, Singapore*

WORLD CLASS

World Class Champion:
KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX

1—**ICEMAN PARSONS**, *245, St. Louis, MO*
2—**JERRY LAWLER**, *234, Memphis, TN*
3—**KAMALA**, *360, Uganda*
4—**ERIC EMBRY**, *225, Lexington, KY*
5—**BUDDY ROBERTS**, *247, Del City, OK*
6—**MICHAEL HAYES**, *255, Marietta, GA*
7—**TERRY GORDY**, *289, Chattanooga, TN*
8—**STEVEN CASEY**, *230, San Antonio, TX*
9—**KENDALL WINDHAM**, *220, Sweetwater, TX*
10—**STEVE COX**, *240, Portsmouth, VA*

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings.

For period ended October 7, 1988

MOST POPULAR

1. **RANDY SAVAGE**
   245, Sarasota, FL
   Last month: No. 2 Most Popular
2. **HULK HOGAN**
   302, Venice Beach, CA
   Last month: No. 1 Most Popular
3. **STING**
   260, Venice Beach, CA
   Last month: No. 3 Most Popular
4. **LEX LUGER**
   268, Chicago, IL
   Last month: No. 4 Most Popular
5. **DUSTY RHODES**
   302, Austin, TX
   Last month: No. 6 Most Popular
6. **THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
   280, Queens, NY
   Last month: No. 7 Most Popular
7. **HACKSAW DUGGAN**
   280, Glens Falls, NY
   Last month: No. 5 Most Popular
8. **JERRY LAWLER**
   234, Memphis, TN
   Last month: No. 8 Most Popular
9. **JAKE ROBERTS**
   246, Stone Mountain, GA
   Last month: No. 9 Most Popular
10. **KERRY VON ERICH**
    260, Denton, TX
    Last month: No. 10 Most Popular

MOST HATED

1. **ANDRE THE GIANT**
   497, Grenoble, France
   Last month: No. 1 Most Hated
2. **RIC FLAIR**
   243, Minneapolis, MN
   Last month: No. 2 Most Hated
3. **TED DiBIASE**
   247, Omaha, NB
   Last month: No. 4 Most Hated
4. **BARRY WINDHAM**
   263, Sweetwater, TX
   Last month: No. 3 Most Hated
5. **RICK RUDE**
   246, Robbinsdale, MN
   Last month: No. 5 Most Hated
6. **THE HONKY TONK MAN**
   255, Memphis, TN
   Last month: No. 7 Most Hated
7. **TOMMY RICH**
   248, Hendersonville, TN
   Last month: unrated
8. **KEVIN SULLIVAN**
   252, Boston, MA
   Last month: No. 8 Most Hated
9. **RON BASS**
   285, Pampa, TX
   Last month: No. 9 Most Hated
10. **RONNIE GARVIN**
    231, Montreal, Quebec
    Last month: unrated

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of those issues—in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only—and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a number-one rating, nine for a number-two ranking, and so on down to one point for a number-10 rating. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, allowing a maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

1—RIC FLAIR ..... 96 points
2—RANDY SAVAGE ..... 83 points
3—LEX LUGER ..... 56 points
4—STING ..... 44 points
5—JERRY LAWLER ..... 44 points

TAG TEAMS

1—THE ROAD WARRIORS ..... 86 points
2—TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON ... 73 points
3—DEMOLITION ..... 67 points
4—THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS ..... 65 points
5—THE FANTASTICS ..... 42 points

STAMPEDE

North American Champion:
MAKHAN SINGH
380, Saginaw, MI

1—**JOHNNY SMITH**
235, Manchester, England
2—**STEVE DiSALVO**
298, Boston, MA
3—**BRUCE HART**
211, Calgary, Alberta
4—**CHRIS BENOIT**
218, Edmonton, Alberta
5—**LANCE IDOL**
225, Hollywood, CA
6—**STEVE BLACKMAN**
250, Pittsburgh, PA
7—**VULKAN SINGH**
300, Billings, MT
8—**GAMA SINGH**
220, Karachi, Pakistan
9—**JERRY MORROW**
235, Martinique
10—**BEEF WELLINGTON**
225, Lloydmaster, Alberta

CWA

CWA Champion:
PHIL HICKERSON
257, Jackson, TN

1—**BRICKHOUSE BROWN**
225, Winter Haven, FL
2—**JEFF JARRETT**
200, Hendersonville, TN
3—**TOMMY RICH**
248, Hendersonville, TN
4—**ROBERT FULLER**
238, Dyresburg, TN
5—**JIMMY VALIANT**
251, New York, NY
6—**GARY YOUNG**
240, Houston, TX
7—**BILL DUNDEE**
214, Melbourne, AUS
8—**JIMMY GOLDEN**
235, Montgomery, AL
9—**BUDDY LANDELL**
236, Los Angeles, CA
10—**SCOTT STEINER**
235, Detroit, MI

CONTINENTAL

Continental Champion:
TOM PRICHARD
220, Houston, TX

1—**TONY ANTHONY**
235, Bucksnorth, TN
2—**JERRY STUBBS**
242, Pensacola, FL
3—**WILLIE B. HERT**
238, El Paso, TX
4—**AUSTIN IDOL**
240, Las Vegas, NV
5—**LORD HUMONGOUS**
325, parts unknown
6—**KEN WAYNE**
208, Memphis, TN
7—**DAN DAVIS**
238, Nashville, TN
8—**THE BULLET**
234, parts unknown
9—**RON FULLER**
238, Dyresburg, TN
10—**TIM HORNER**
235, Morristown, TN

FLORIDA

FCW Champion:
DICK SLATER
235, Tampa, FL

1—**JOHNNY ACE**
250, San Bernadino, CA
2—**THE TERMINATOR**
260, parts unknown
3—**SCOTTY THE BODY**
235, Palm Beach, FL
4—**MIKE GRAHAM**
221, Tampa, FL
5—**STEVE KEIRN**
238, Tampa, FL
6—**MARK STARR**
232, Tampa, FL
7—**THE BLADE**
231, Tampa, FL
8—**THE ROCK**
248, Tampa, FL
9—**JIM BACKLUND**
221, Plant City, FL
10—**DUSTIN RHODES**
240, Austin, TX

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 135 wrestlers in 12 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

A new number one! Because of their September 10 victory over **Tully Blanchard** and **Arn Anderson** for the NWA World tag team title, **The Midnight Express** has taken over the top spot in our tag team ratings. Tully and Arn signed a contract with the WWF shortly after losing the belts and were not scheduled to wrestle again until the end of the ratings period; thus, they were dropped from the ratings. But don't be surprised to see them return shortly. Now known as "The Brainbusters" and manged by **Bobby Heenan**, Tully and Arn figure to make a big impact on the WWF.

Demolition

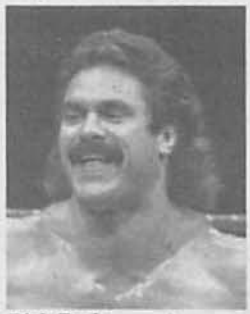
WWF World tag team champions **Demolition** remain at number two because the ratings committee felt they have not shown the dominance and all-around ability necessary to be number one. They win most of their matches because of manager **Mr. Fuji's** outside interference and other illegal methods.

We messed up! And hopefully, it's not too late to atone for our mistake. In the December 1988 issue of *Pro Wresting Illustrated,* we analyzed the "Most Popular" ratings and promised to analyze the "Most Hated" ratings in the January issue.

Well, we goofed. Instead, we listed your silly ratings. But better late than never. Here's the long-awaited analysis of the "Most Hated" ratings.

Andre the Giant, one of the most popular men in the sport just a few years ago, is easily the most hated now. Since 1987, Andre has feuded with some of the most beloved men in the WWF: **Hulk Hogan**, **Randy Savage**, and **Hacksaw Duggan**. And his recent attacks on Savage's manager **Elizabeth** have further enraged the fans.

Ric Flair, the NWA World champion who saves his belt through disqualifications and the outside interfence of **J.J. Dillon**, has lost all respect in the eyes of the fans. When was the last time he scored a clean pinfall victory over a top challenger? . . . After watching **Ted DiBiase's** treatment of host **Robin Leach** on *Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous,* the fans probably hate "The Million-Dollar Man" even more. His callous treatment of other people and the way he flaunts his wealth are positively evil . . . U.S. champion **Barry Windham** dumped partner **Lex Luger** and joined **The Four Horsemen**. He uses devious means to win his matches and has taken on a new arrogance. The fans may never forgive him.



Rick Rude

Rick Rude is also incredibly arrogant and egotistical, but his treatment of **Cheryl Roberts**, wife of **Jake Roberts**, earned him a spot on the "Most Hated" list. Is there a more vulgar man in wrestling? . . . **The Honky Tonk Man** wants to be loved. He wants the fans to enjoy his music and wrestling. After all, he thanks the fans for their support every match. Nonetheless, they hate him for his devious tactics and several behind-the-back attacks on Savage and **The Ultimate Warrior** . . . Frustrated by his inability to win a world title, **Tommy Rich** has changed his ways once again. The fans now know they can never trust this once-popular star.

The **Precious** incident earlier in the year might have made **Kevin Sullivan** a permanent entry on this list . . . **Ron Bass** attacked **Brutus Beefcake** on several occasions; now the fans are thirsting for revenge . . . **Ronnie Garvin** has certainly changed his ways since last year, when he was NWA World champion for two months. The money-hungry Garvin has turned his back on the fans and the rules of wrestling.

It's The Sunshine State! Land of great citrus fruit, Walt Disney World, and some of the most exciting wrestling in the country with Florida Championship Wrestling. FCW takes center stage in the revolving ratings this month, boasting seven Florida natives in its top 10: FCW champion **Dick Slater**, **Mike Graham**, **Steve Keirn**, **Mark Starr**, **The Blade**, **The Rock**, and **Jim Backlund**. This relatively new federation also features **Dustin Rhodes**, son of "The American Dream" **Dusty Rhodes**.

That's all, folks! But keep those cards and letters coming. The address for mail is: "Ratings Analysis," c/o *Pro Wrestling Illustrated;* Box 48; Rockville Centre, NY; 11571. □

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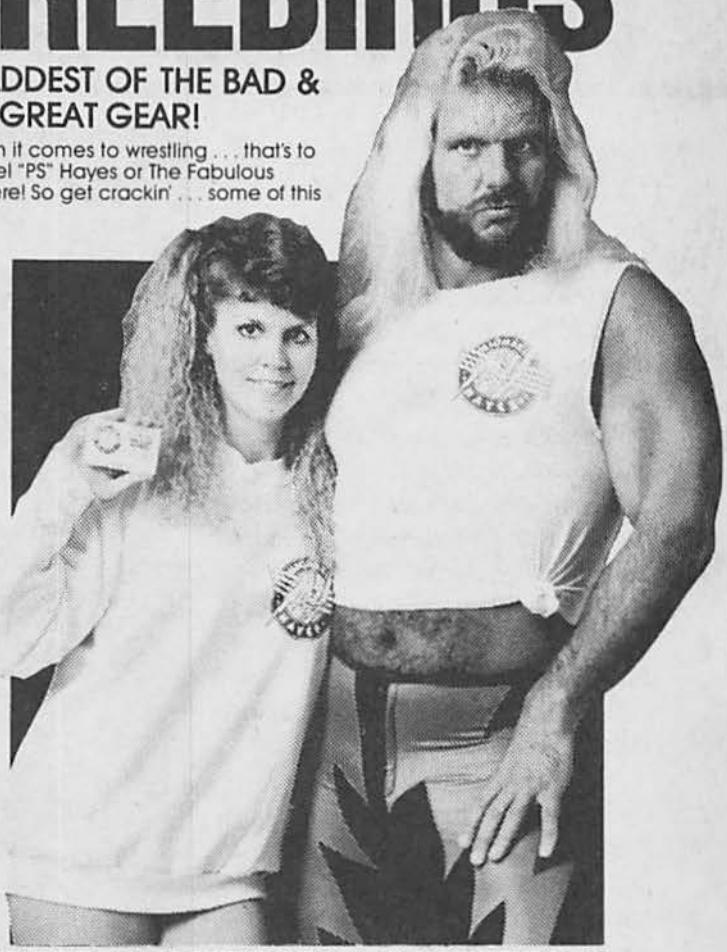

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COL. DeBEERS: "SGT. WASHED UP—*JUST LIKE*

WELCOME BACK TO the United States, Col. DeBeers. Are you happy to return to the land of the free, Colonel?

"How could I possibly be happy to be back in a polluted, decadent country populated by ignorant, downtrodden people?" spit DeBeers.

What did you think of the presidential election, Colonel?

"Bush and Dukakis were perfect candidates for the highest office in this lowly nation," claimed DeBeers. "Both are lying despots, and lying is the leading form of expression in this God-forsaken country."

Why did you attack Sgt. Slaughter, Colonel?

"Sgt. Slaughter is the perfect symbol of everything that is wrong about America," said DeBeers. "Slaughter and the U.S. *used* to be world powers, but now Slaughter is all washed up—just like the infernal nation whose virtues he misguidedly extolls!"

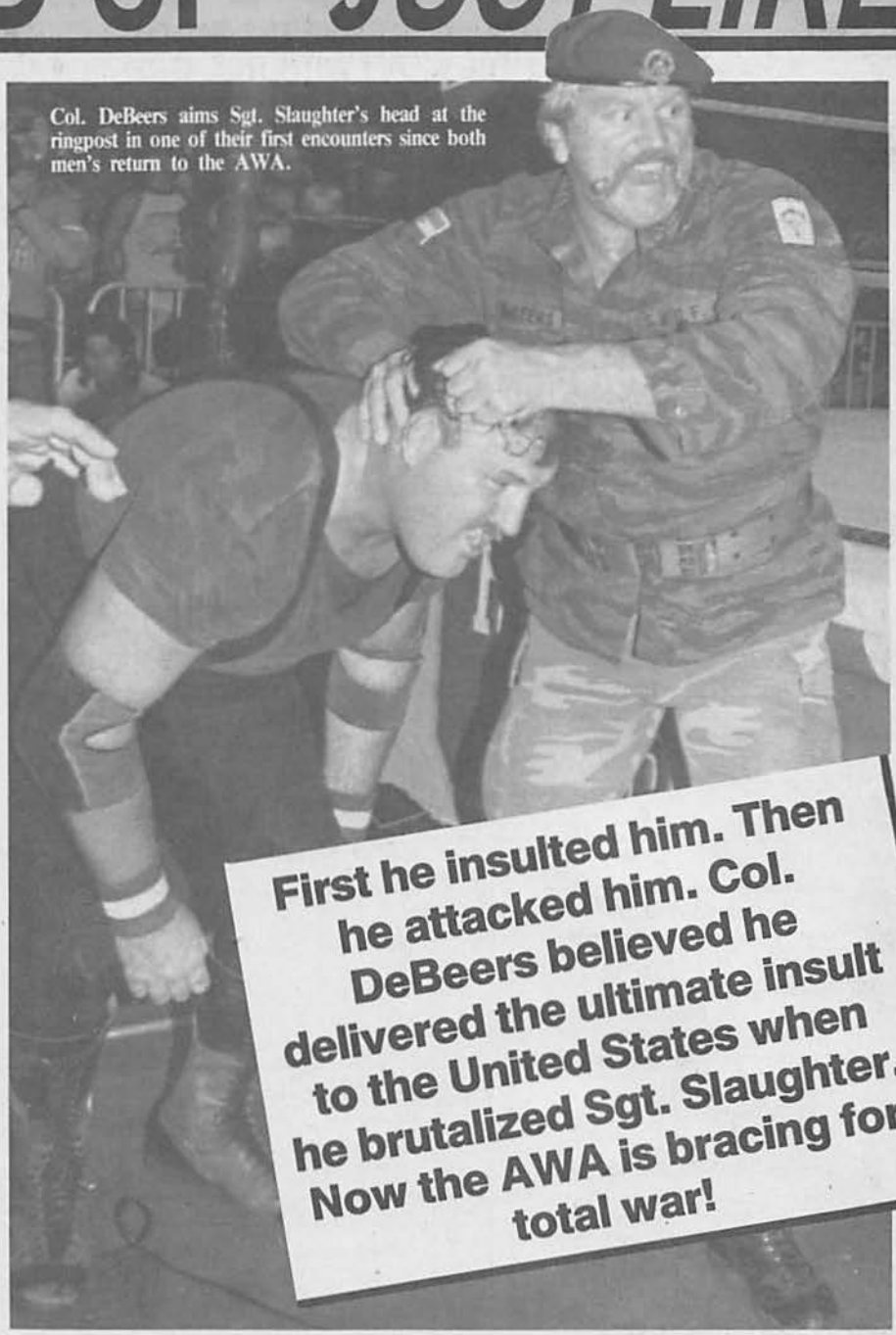
After an absence of more than a year, the controversial Col. DeBeers has returned to the AWA—but so has Sgt. Slaughter. If any one man could bring out the best in a man like Slaughter—who claims to bleed red, white, and blue—it would have to be this outspoken South African. But DeBeers has yet to give Slaughter a chance to prove his talents face-to-face.

"There's not enough room for both of us in the AWA," complained Slaughter, still nursing severe neck and back injuries suffered at the hands of the mercenary. "If it takes the last breath in my body, I'll drive that anti-American militant right out of this great sport."

DeBeers had almost done that on his own. Banned by the AWA in 1987, manager "Diamond" Dallas Page was able to sign the Colonel to a contract by paying off a year-old fine in August. Most fans wish that Page had saved his money.

"I am back to win the AWA World title," said the ever-confident DeBeers upon making his return. "The wrestlers in the AWA are typical U.S. lackeys without talent or stamina. It is the proper time to make my return."

At the same time, Slaughter was negotiating to make *his* AWA comeback. The rock-jawed patriot had been sorely missed since leaving the AWA in 1987, wrestling mainly on independent cards



Col. DeBeers aims Sgt. Slaughter's head at the ringpost in one of their first encounters since both men's return to the AWA.

First he insulted him. Then he attacked him. Col. DeBeers believed he delivered the ultimate insult to the United States when he brutalized Sgt. Slaughter. Now the AWA is bracing for total war!

SLAUGHTER IS THE U.S.A.!"

DeBeers has Slaughter down, but the Sarge doesn't intend to let this South African madman have the advantage for long.

since that time. When he teamed with Keith Eric against Soldat Ustinov and Teijho Khan September 18 at the Louisville Gardens, he had little idea that another party was about to introduce himself.

Slaughter and Eric had the advantage on their opponents when DeBeers brazenly interfered in the match. Eric was piledrived by DeBeers outside the ring, which led to a disputed countout loss for Eric and Slaughter.

"What the hell was this DeBeers guy doing sticking his nose in *my* match?" asked a perturbed Slaughter afterward. "If it's a war he wants, he's come to

the right place. I can't wait to meet this idiot again!"

Slaughter didn't have to wait long. The very next night in Memphis, Slaughter was wrestling Terry Adams when he *again* was blindsided by DeBeers. This time, the former Marine drill instructor ran his foe back to the dressing room.

"Not *nearly* good enough," responded a cool DeBeers after the attack. "Slaughter survived. He is nothing but a paunchy, tired symbol of a flabby, tired country. I demand that I meet Slaughter tonight so I can prove to these misguided fans that their hero is past his prime."

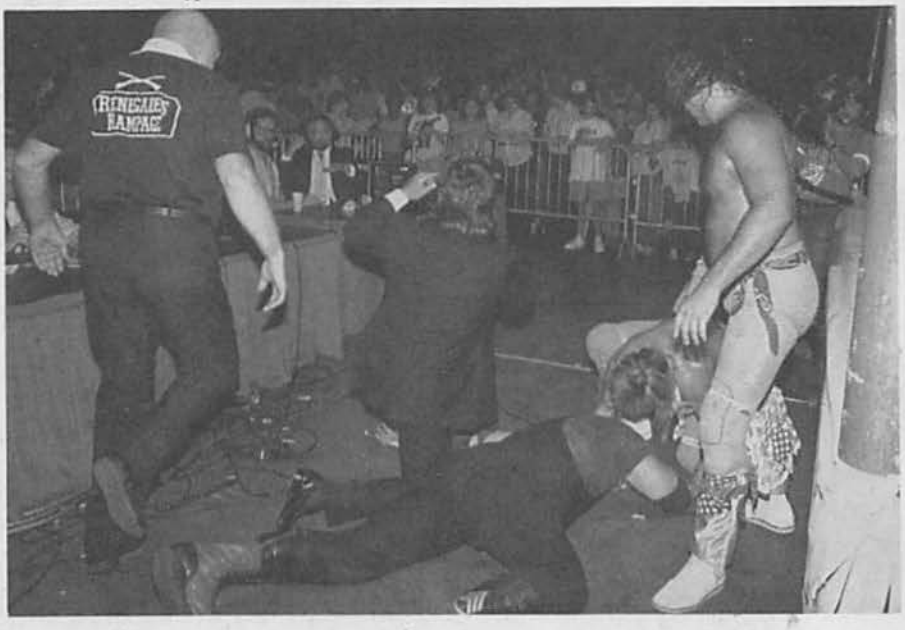
Slaughter, too, wanted to wrestle DeBeers, but the entire card had already been scheduled. Luckily, The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Rick Morton and Robert Gibson, invited Slaughter to join them in a six-man match. DeBeers teamed with Ustinov and Khan. The first *real* meeting of DeBeers and Slaughter was set.

Typically, DeBeers' self-professed courage turned into cowardice. Refusing to tag off to face Slaughter, DeBeers simply walked out of the match, leaving Khan and Ustinov to fend for themselves against three opponents.

After the match, Slaughter, Morton, and Gibson were being interviewed when Ustinov and Khan challenged them to get back into the ring. Gibson and Morton took them up on the dare, but this unscheduled fracas gave DeBeers the opening he needed to blindside Slaughter, delivering a brutal face-first piledriver on the concrete floor outside the ring.

"This proved that Slaughter and the U.S. are phony and false," said DeBeers afterward. "A veteran wrestler should be prepared for such an attack. Now there is one less wrestler clogging up the path to the title."

These senseless assaults are a DeBeers staple. This attack brought back memories of DeBeers savaging Jimmy Snuka in October 1986. Snuka was perched on the top turnbuckle preparing to deliver a flying splash onto Larry Zbyszko when DeBeers ran to the ring apron and pushed Snuka off, sending the Polynesian crashing to the cement floor. He followed it up with *two* face-first piledrivers. Many claim Snuka hasn't been the same since.



DeBeers attacks Slaughter from behind with his riding crop (above) before delivering a face-first piledriver on the floor. Soon after, The Rock 'n' Roll Express come to Sarge's aid (below). This type of sneak-attack is typical for DeBeers.

Now, Slaughter is feeling the same pain Snuka once felt. The day after the attack, Slaughter telephoned AWA President Stanley Blackburn. He demanded that he meet DeBeers in a boot camp match at Super Clash III on December 13 in Chicago. DeBeers, amazingly, agreed to face Slaughter under these terms, even though Slaughter has vowed to cripple him.

So what do you think of Col. DeBeers, Sgt. Slaughter?

"Lousy elitist scum," griped Slaughter. "Sgt. Slaughter's washed up? The Colonel is sadly mistaken. I'll have to take some time off to heal from these injuries, but I'll never be *fully* healed until I put DeBeers out of action for good. I'll make him sorry he ever took this country's name in vain."

How will you defeat DeBeers, Sergeant?

"Look at it this way," reasons Slaughter. "It's South Africa against the United States of America now. Which side would you put *your* money on?" □

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Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.

PRESS CONFERENCE

STING

MENTION THE NAME "Sting" to a rock 'n' roll fan, and most would say that he is one of the greatest performers in history. Mention "Sting" to a wrestling fan, and you'll get the same response—only this time the raves will be about one of the premier **wrestlers** *of the modern era.*

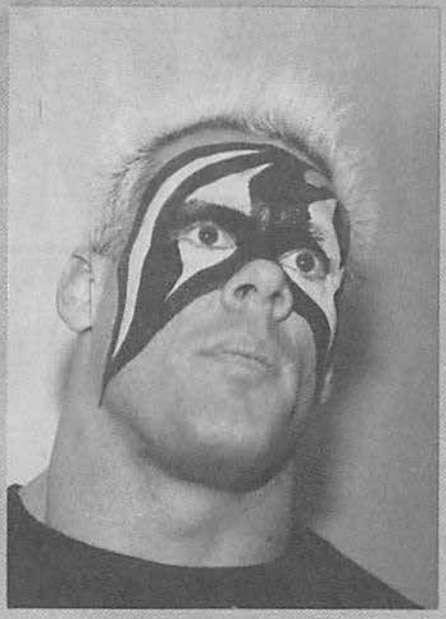
And rightfully so. For most of 1988, the young California-bred contender has been a top challenger to virtually every singles and tag team championship in the NWA. Although he has yet to garner any NWA gold, Sting's unbridled enthusiasm and stunning aerial and scientific talents have kept him solidly entrenched as a favorite with millions of fans around the world.

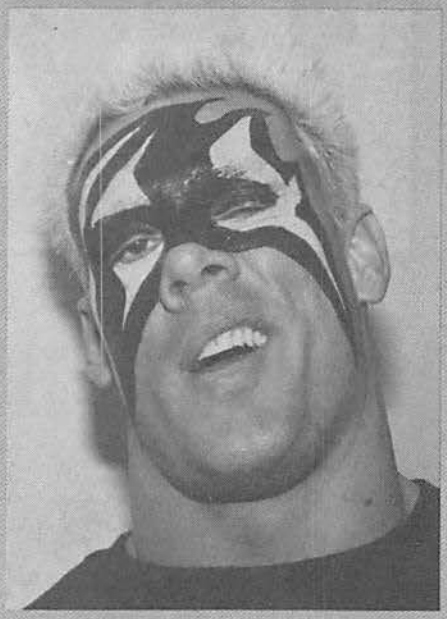
It won't be long before Sting gains a title. Just ask Ric Flair. The 6'2", 260-pound dynamo has given Flair arguably the toughest title bouts of his current reign. When Sting went to a thrilling 45-minute draw with Flair at the Clash of the Champions on March 27, he did much more than take the champion to the limit: He cemented his reputation as the NWA's fastest-rising star.

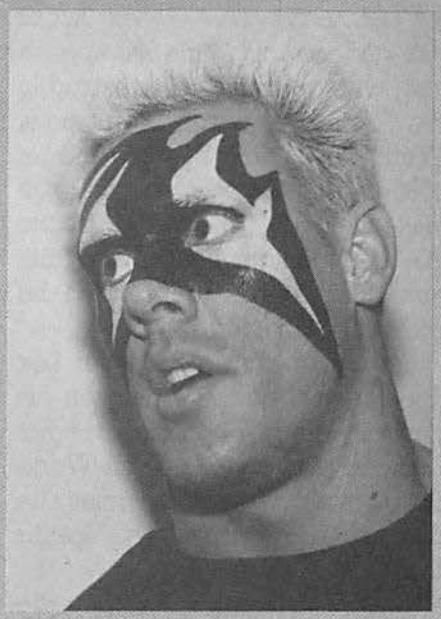
Sting isn't about to let Barry Windham use the clawhold on him. As the number-one challenger to Windham's U.S. title, Sting has had plenty of opportunities to unseat the champion, but he hasn't been able to score a clean pinfall.

Bolstered by his fine showings against Flair, Sting has set his sights on another title, the U.S. championship currently held by Barry Windham. Many observers predicted that Sting would be able to defeat the more-experienced Windham. But the champion has been a significant roadblock for the challenger, thanks in large part to the interference of manager James J. Dillon.

Managing Editor Craig Peters, Associate Editor David Rosenbaum, and Assistant Editor Andy Rodriguez ventured to sunny California to speak with Sting during a rare day off for the busy wrestler.





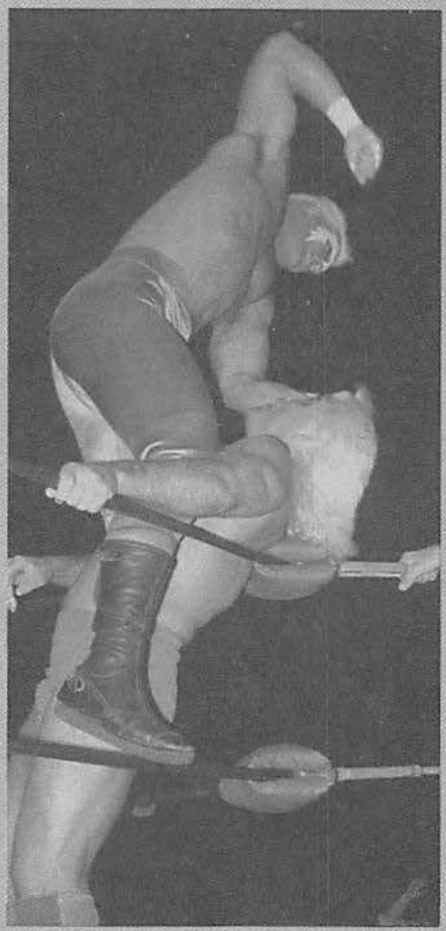


"I've got myself a secret plan to combat Dillon, his size-nine shoe, his bad breath, and ol' peroxide-head Flair. I'm gonna make sure they never stick their lousy, arrogant noses in my business again."

CRAIG PETERS: Sting, you've moved from being ranked as the top contender for the NWA World title to being the top contender for the U.S. championship. Do you consider this a demotion?

STING: A demotion? *Naw,* not at all, Craig. I'm just lookin' at things as a natural progression. I received a number of title shots at Flair—the only problem is that the record shows I didn't win the belt. Now one of my best buddies, Lex Luger, is the number-one contender to Flair, while I'm busy wrestling that big drink of dirty water, Barry Windham. That's all fine with me. I'm still young, and I know there's plenty of opportunity coming in the years ahead. Besides, the only reason I couldn't take the belt from Flair is because of all the outside interference by that crumb bum J.J. Dillon.

DAVID ROSENBAUM: Actually, it's *still* Dillon's meddling that's kept you from defeating Windham on several occasions. It seems that whenever Barry gets in trouble, J.J. is always there to bail him out. If Dillon's not able to do it, then Flair is around to earn the disqualification for Barry.



"The Stinger" pounds Ric Flair, whom he nearly beat for the NWA title.

STING: Sickening, ain't it? It's the same old, tired story all the time. Well, I've got myself a secret plan to combat Dillon, his size-nine shoe, his bad breath, and ol' peroxide-head Flair to boot. I'm gonna make sure they never stick their lousy, arrogant noses in my business again.

ANDY RODRIGUEZ: What are you going to do?

STING: Fight fire with fire, baby. Dillon is always there to get Windham out of a pin or my scorpion deathlock, the hold which nobody has *ever* been able to break. But I've got a lot of friends around here who hate Dillon as much as I do, *true* champions like Dusty Rhodes, Steve Williams, Lex, and Nikita Koloff. One of these days, one of these guys will be able to get to J.J. and Flair before they can interfere. That way, I can cleanly defeat Windham, end all of this so-called controversy, and get the belt I truly deserve.

PETERS: What are your impressions

(Continued on page 62)

LEX-PLOS

"I'll Take Flair's Title—And Leave Him For Dead!"

THE LAST THING Lex Luger had on his mind two years ago, when he was still wrestling in the Florida area, was *not* being a World champion by the end of 1988. He didn't care *where* it was—the NWA, the WWF, or the AWA—but Luger *knew* that by the time 1989 rolled around, he'd be on top of the world.

But time is running out for Lex Luger. Now, the *first* thing on his mind is failure: the failure of not being able to win the NWA World championship from a man he thinks—he *knows*—he's better than.

This frustration, bottled up inside a man with incredible power and determination, is about to be expressed in the most dangerous way possible.

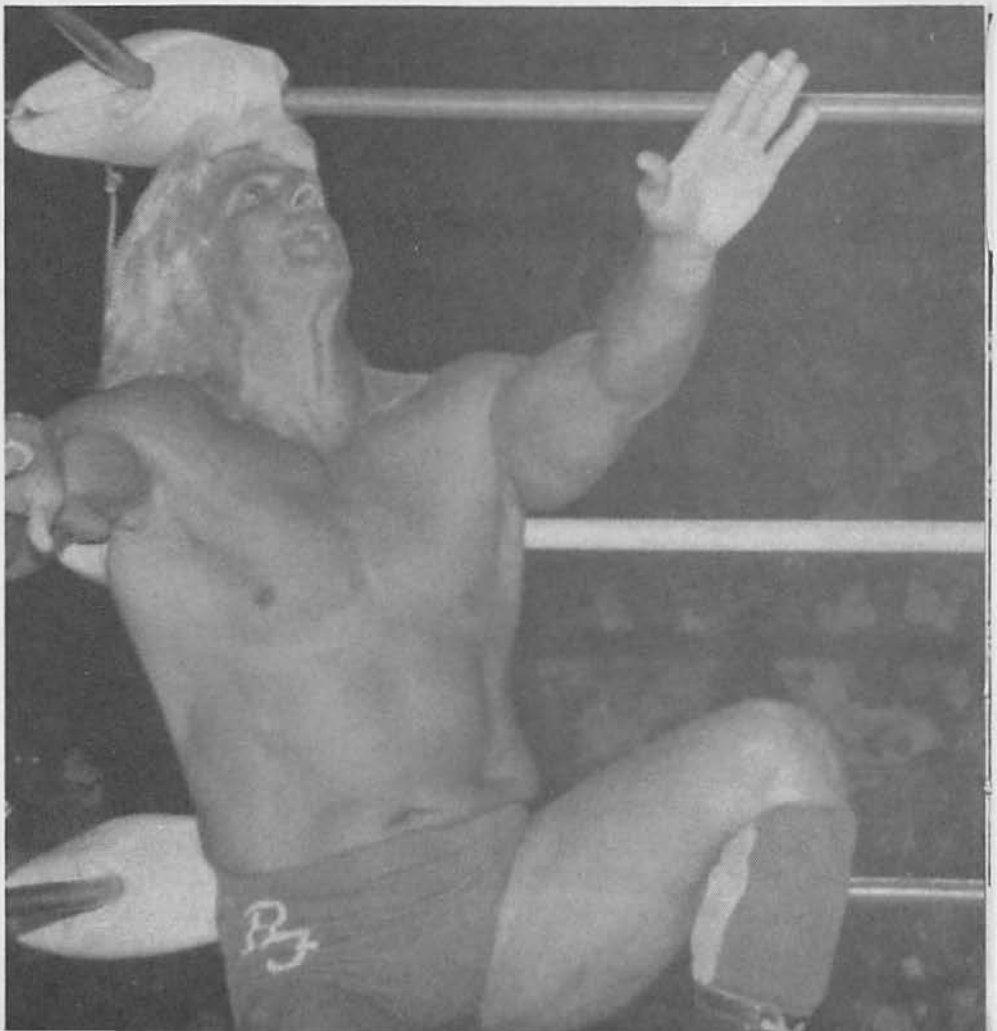
Beware, Ric Flair!

It's time for a Lex-plosion!

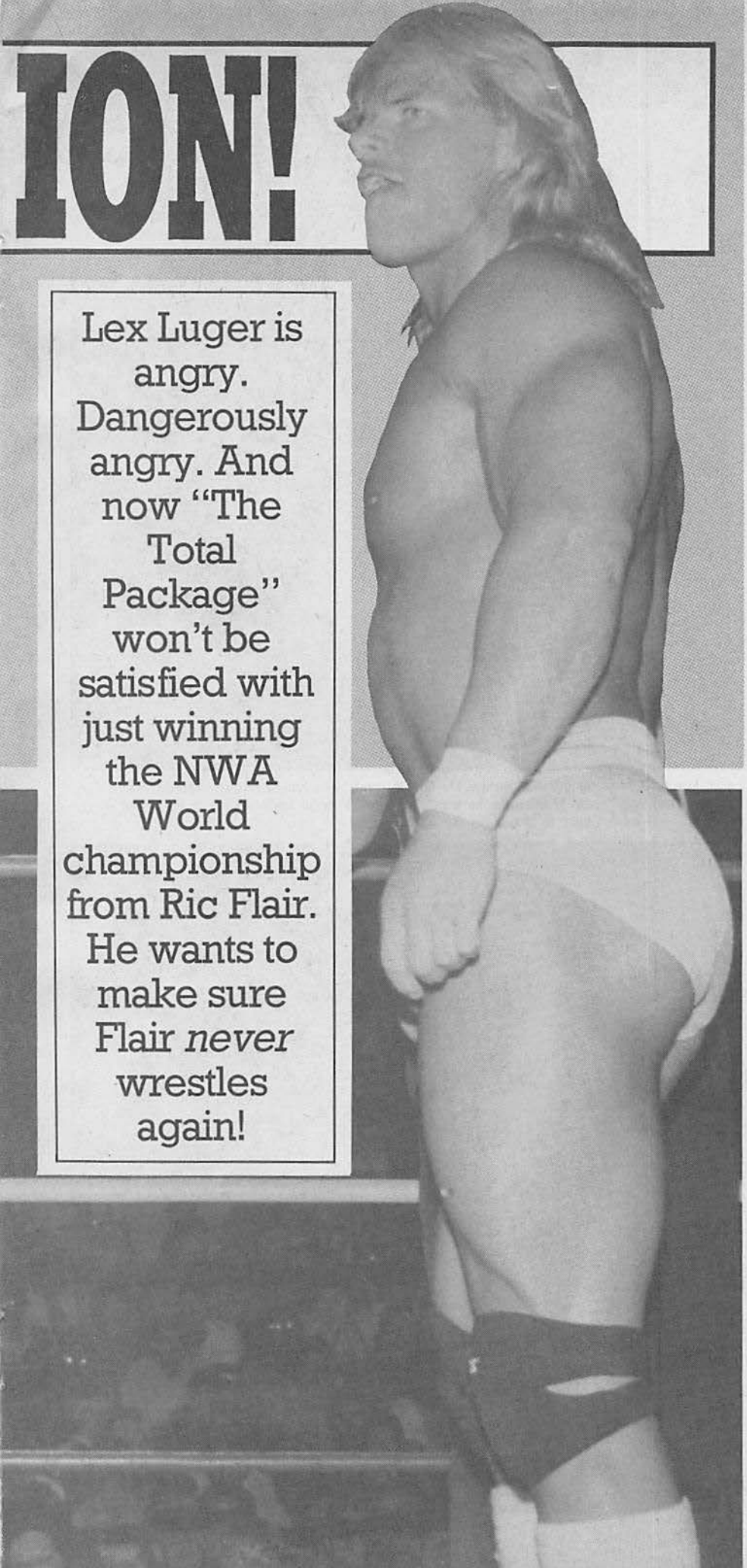
"It's no longer enough just to beat him," said an enraged Luger after he and Flair battled to a 21-minute double-countout in Richmond, Virginia. "He's pushed my patience to the limit with all of his underhanded tricks. Now I'm gonna tear his guts out piece by piece and eat 'em for dinner! I'll take Flair's title and leave him for dead!

"Let me explain what I'm going to do. I'm going to wrap his skull in a sleeperhold and not let go, I'm going to keep that hold on until the blood vessels in his forehead burst open and blood spills out of his head. Then I'm gonna get some of it on my hands and make Flair taste his *own* blood. It'll be the *last* thing he ever tastes!

"Then *I'm* gonna have a little feast! I'm gonna slam him into the mat and plant a clawhold on his guts, except I'm gonna get a *good* grip and I'm gonna tear him *open.* The fans are gonna be running from their seats in terror, because they won't know what's gotten into me! But I plan on making sure that Flair *never* steps foot in the ring again! I'll make a sandwich out of



ION!



Lex Luger is angry. Dangerously angry. And now "The Total Package" won't be satisfied with just winning the NWA World championship from Ric Flair. He wants to make sure Flair *never* wrestles again!

Flair's intestines and jam it down his throat so far that he'll have to cross his legs to belch."

As Luger continued to rant uncharacteristically about the terrors he is about to unleash on Flair, his face grew redder and his breath quickened. Several wrestlers walked toward his locker when Luger smashed a wooden stool with his bare hands and punched a hole through the wall.

"Calm down, Lex," urged Sting, who also has been repeatedly frustrated in his attempts to win the belt from Flair. "Save some of that energy for the ring." But Luger didn't calm down. Instead, he grabbed the microphone from a nearby TV cameraman and walked toward the camera.

"This is a message for you, Ric Flair," Luger screamed. "Listen up, punk! Your days are numbered. I'm *sick* of your face, I'm *sick* of your suits, I'm *sick* of your gold chains, and I'm *sick* of your manager! The next time you meet me in the ring, you're gonna wish you and Dillon never got me out of Florida."

Indeed, this could be a classic case of two men painfully reaping what they had sown. Flair and Dillon were responsible for taking Luger away from Florida and bringing him to the heartland of the NWA. They made him a member of The Four Horsemen and, in doing so, accomplished two objectives: They made the Horsemen stronger while keeping Luger away from Flair's title.

But they didn't bank on Luger leaving the Horsemen after less than a year and targeting Flair for destruction. And they also didn't count on Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson leaving the NWA in early September. That, more than anything, has made Flair more vulnerable than ever before: Tully and Arn can no longer save him from Luger's wrath.

"That's the key," Luger explained in more serene tones.

"Now he has less ways to get himself disqualified. It used to be that you always had to look out for Blanchard and Anderson, but now Windham's the only one you have to worry about. And Windham has enough to worry about himself with Sting after him all the time. The way I figure it, we've got Flair and Windham right where we want them."

At this point, however, Luger realizes that Dillon's outside interference and Flair's cowardliness could still prevent him from winning the belt.

"I have to get him into a position where he can't get away," Luger said. "I've been begging the NWA promoters to schedule a steel cage match or a lumberjack match, but they won't do it. They say they can only do that as a last resort."

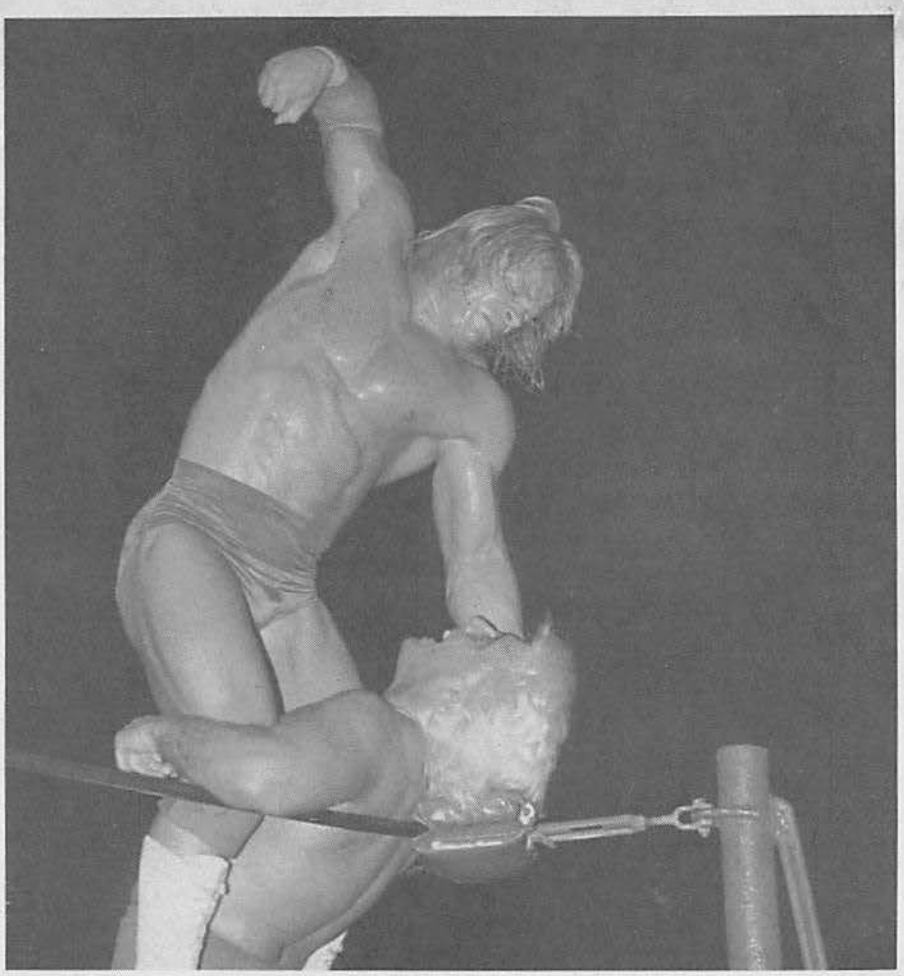
Is it time for the last resort?

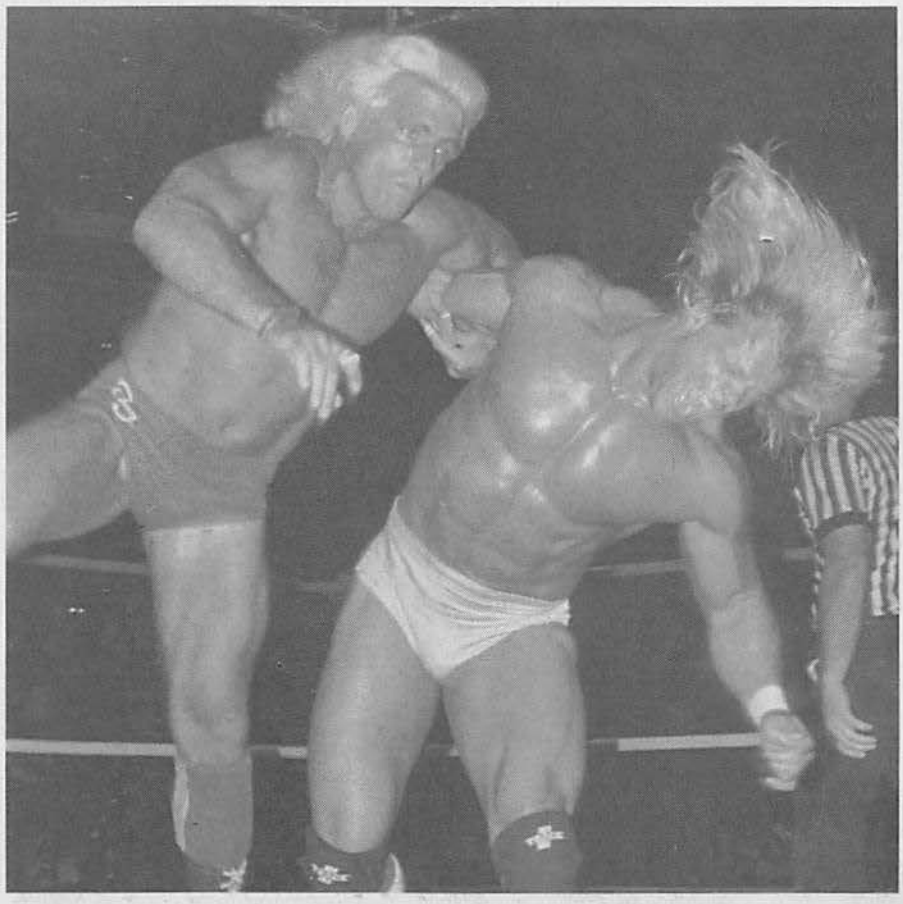
On August 12 in Norfolk, Virginia, Flair was disqualified for tossing Luger over the top rope. On August 26 at The Omni in Atlanta, Luger beat Flair by disqualification and, of course, did not win the belt. On September 16 in Richmond, Flair and Luger battled to a double-countout. And in their September 25 Omni rematch, even referee John Ayres, the former pro football lineman, couldn't keep Dillon from interfering with his shoe, causing Flair's disqualification.

Statistics reveal that an incredible 85 percent of the Flair-Luger matches end with Flair getting disqualified. The remaining 15 percent are split between Luger getting disqualified, double-countouts, and double-disqualifications. There has yet to be a clean pinfall.

"Maybe I overreacted before," Luger said, "but it's just getting to be too much. I'm sick of these worthless victories. Give me a chance to wrestle Flair where he *can't* get away, and I'll beat him.

"And then," he added with a grin, "so he can't ever wrestle again, I'll cripple him—just for good measure!" □





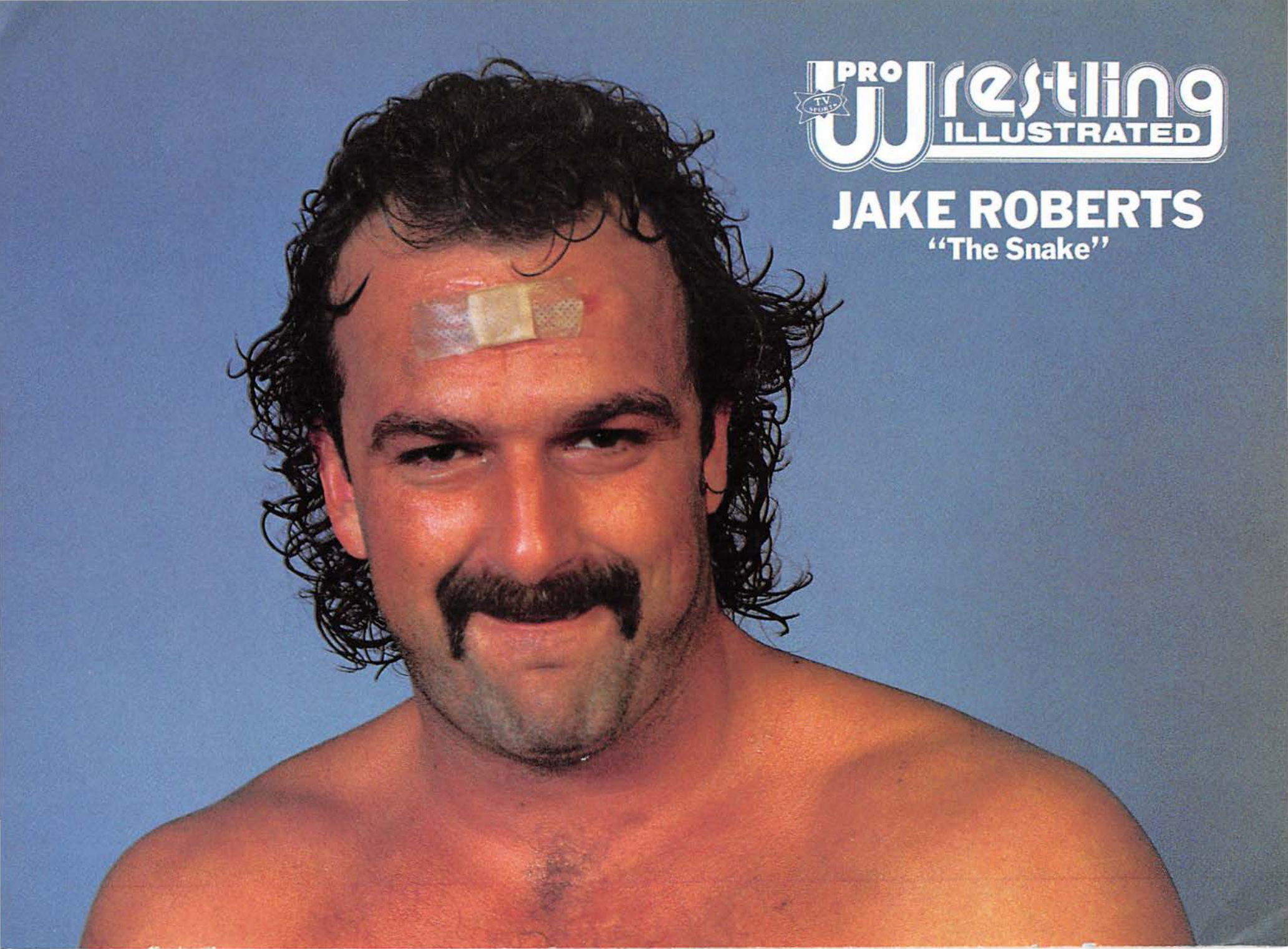
Luger pummels Flair against the turnbuckle (above) and gives him a hiptoss (below). "The Total Package" not only wants Flair's title, he wants to injure Flair so badly that he'll be forced to quit wrestling—and have Luger to thank for it!

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
T.V. SPORTS

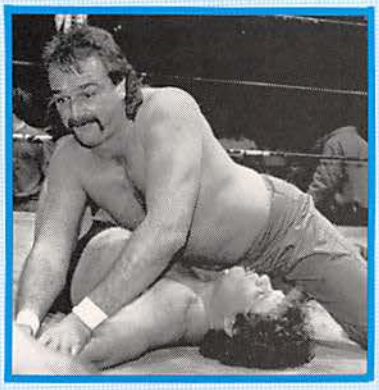
CLOSE-UP

JAKE ROBERTS

JAKE "THE SNAKE" Roberts is currently one of the most popular competitors in the WWF . . . Stands 6'5" and weighs 246 pounds . . . Lean, lanky build allows him to glide around the ring like his reptilian namesake . . . Known for his fast hands, lightning-quick clotheslines, and trademark move: the DDT . . . When asked what DDT stands for, he simply replies "the end" . . . Has a cool demeanor and calculating mind that keep him on an even keel . . . As expressed in interviews, his ring philosophy is sometimes confusing, but always heartfelt . . . Says that as a child he used to practice signing his autograph because even then he admired himself so much . . . Played football, basketball, and track in high school . . . Defeated Bill Ash in his professional debut in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on May 13, 1975 . . . Wrestled extensively in Canada early in his career . . . Has made several tours of Japan . . . In late 1979 and early 1980, suffered two broken arms, but struggled back from those injuries to win the Louisiana title . . . Separated his shoulder when he lost that title to Ernie Ladd . . . As a last-minute substitute for Paul Orndorff, Roberts defeated The Masked Grappler for the North American title . . . Orndorff said he overslept and was angry with Roberts for not trying to contact him . . . In 1982, traveled to Florida and became a member of Kevin Sullivan's cult . . . Sullivan tried to give him the Southern title in gratitude for helping him attack Dusty Rhodes and win the belt, but the transaction was disallowed and the belt put up in a tournament . . . Despite being one of the most hated men in the sport, secured several title matches with NWA World champion Ric Flair, who was angered by Sullivan's control over Roberts . . . Also feuded with Barry Windham . . . Their matches included a violent street brawl . . . Was treated for a nervous breakdown after leaving Sullivan's psychologically taxing stable . . . Went to the Mid-Atlantic area, where Paul Jones managed him and exercised his own brand of mind control . . . Wrestled singly and in tag matches with stablemates Gene Anderson and Dory Funk Jr. . . . Most hated opponent then was Rick Steamboat . . . Moved to Georgia in late 1983 and joined Paul Ellering's Legion of Doom along with The Road Warriors and The Spoiler . . . Feuded with such men as Tommy Rich and Ronnie Garvin . . . Defeated Garvin for the National TV title . . . Before granting Garvin a rematch, Ellering demanded $34,000 . . . Garvin paid the money and regained the title . . . Saying there was a "conspiracy" against The Legion of Doom, Roberts left Georgia for World Class . . . Held the World Class six-man title with Chris Adams and Gino Hernandez . . . Despised the Von Erichs . . . Left World Class in late 1984 for the Mid-South area, where he teamed with The Barbarian against Ted DiBiase and Steve Williams . . . When they finally got a shot at DiBiase and Williams' Mid-South tag title, DiBiase fled the ring shortly after the match began . . . Later feuded with DiBiase in singles matches . . . Roberts started hearing the cheers of the fans, which angered The Barbarian . . . Barbarian joined Humongous, Oliver Humperdink, and The Nightmare in an attack on Roberts after "The Snake" unmasked The Nightmare in a match . . . In matches with Humongous, Roberts wore a hockey goalie's mask like Humongous' . . . Put up a valiant fight against the massive Humongous at The Superdome on Thanksgiving 1985, but didn't win the match . . . Defeated Dick Slater for the North American title on February 14, 1986, but lost the belt a week later . . . Entered the WWF in early 1986 as a rulebreaker wearing depictions of a snake on his tights . . . Shocked opponents and fans alike by bringing a live snake—his pet Damien—into the ring and draping it over his beaten foes . . . Pinned George Wells at the New York portion of WrestleMania II . . . Became host of "The Snake Pit," an interview segment on WWF television shows . . . Resumed feud with Rick Steamboat . . . DDT'd Steamboat on the arena floor on *Saturday Night's Main Event* . . . To combat Jake's snake, Steamboat started bringing a dragon lizard to the ring . . . Received several shots at Hulk Hogan's WWF World title . . . On "The Snake Pit," The Honky Tonk Man smashed Roberts over the head with his guitar . . . It was then that the WWF fans rallied to his side, changing him from one of the most hated men in the federation to one of the most beloved . . . In what was considered an upset, Honky Tonk pinned Roberts at WrestleMania III . . . Throughout the summer of 1987, Roberts received title shots at Intercontinental champion Honky Tonk, but didn't win the belt . . . On several occasions, Honky Tonk was able to attack Roberts by disguising himself as Kim Chee, Kamala's handler . . . Was on a winning team (along with Randy Savage, Rick Steamboat, Brutus Beefcake, and Hacksaw Duggan) at the first Survivor Series on Thanksgiving 1987 . . . Became incensed with Rick Rude after Rude tried to kiss Jake's wife Cheryl on national television . . . Wrestled Rude to a time-limit draw at WrestleMania IV . . . Their feud got hotter when Rude started wearing wrestling tights with Mrs. Roberts' face drawn on them . . . Roberts brought Cheryl out to ringside for inspiration; it worked, as he won nearly every match . . . In a break from the Rude feud, pinned Hercules at SummerSlam 88 . . . Fought Rude in matches with the special stipulation that the winner would be the first one who successfully executed either the "Rude Awakening" or the DDT . . . Roberts will not be a serious contender for either the WWF World or Intercontinental titles until he conclusively settles his dispute with Rude—which seems unlikely in the forseeable future. □

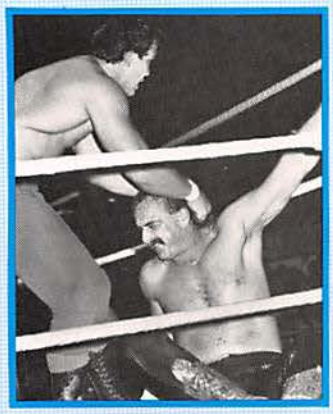

PRO
TV SPORTS
Wrestling
ILLUSTRATED
JAKE ROBERTS
"The Snake"

CLOSE-UP



FAVORITE MANEUVER

The DDT. There have been many imitators, but the first—and best—practitioner of this brutal maneuver was "The Snake." The DDT packs the force of a piledriver. But unlike a piledriver, it doesn't take a lot of effort to get an opponent into the proper position. Roberts claims he can execute the DDT in many different ways, giving the unfortunate victim anything from a bump on the head to a broken neck.



MOST HATED OPPONENT

Rick Rude. Ever since Rude tried to kiss Jake's wife Cheryl on national television, Roberts has been looking to destroy him at every opportunity. Things only got worse for "The Ravishing One" when he started wearing tights with Cheryl's face painted on them. Rude may think he's being cute, but there's nothing cute about what will happen to him if "The Snake" gets his wish.

GREATEST MATCH

February 14, 1986 vs. Dick Slater. It was a sweet Valentine's Day victory for Roberts as he beat Slater for the North American title in the Mid-South area. "The Snake" lost the belt a week later, but he had proven himself capable of winning a major title anywhere. Buoyed with new confidence, Roberts traveled to the WWF, where other conquests awaited.

TOUGHEST OPPONENT

Rick Steamboat. Roberts has always been troubled by Steamboat's combination of scientific wrestling and martial arts. When he first entered the WWF, Roberts engaged Steamboat in a serious feud, once giving "The Dragon" a DDT on a concrete arena floor. However, Steamboat eventually got the better of "The Snake." This rivalry goes back to 1983, when both men wrestled in the Mid-Atlantic area.

HAS HOGAN BECOME SAVAGE'S BODYGUARD?

It may just be normal competition among contenders, but alert fans see Hulk Hogan's matches with Ted DiBiase, Andre the Giant, and Bad News Brown as more than just matches. As Hogan wears down Randy Savage's challengers one by one, he is not just a viable contender, he becomes the World champion's bodyguard!

JUST LIKE THE rich and famous, Randy Savage must protect what is his. Right now, the list of protectables is lengthy: Savage has perfect health, a lovely manager, and the WWF World championship belt.

But does Randy Savage need a bodyguard to protect what is his?

And is Hulk Hogan serving as that bodyguard?

A close examination of the WWF scene in recent months shows that Hogan has indeed been acting as Savage's unofficial bodyguard ever since "The Hulkster" battled Andre the Giant to a double-disqualification (and, thus, an elimination) in the second round of the WrestleMania IV

World title tournament. Later on in that tourney, it was Hogan who helped secure his friend's title victory.

Neither Savage nor Hogan would deny that WrestleMania IV signified more than the beginning of The Randy Savage Era. When Hogan helped his friend win the World title, he was passing more than the WWF championship torch. Since Savage and Hogan were friends and allies, Hogan was passing up an opportunity to wrestle for the title.

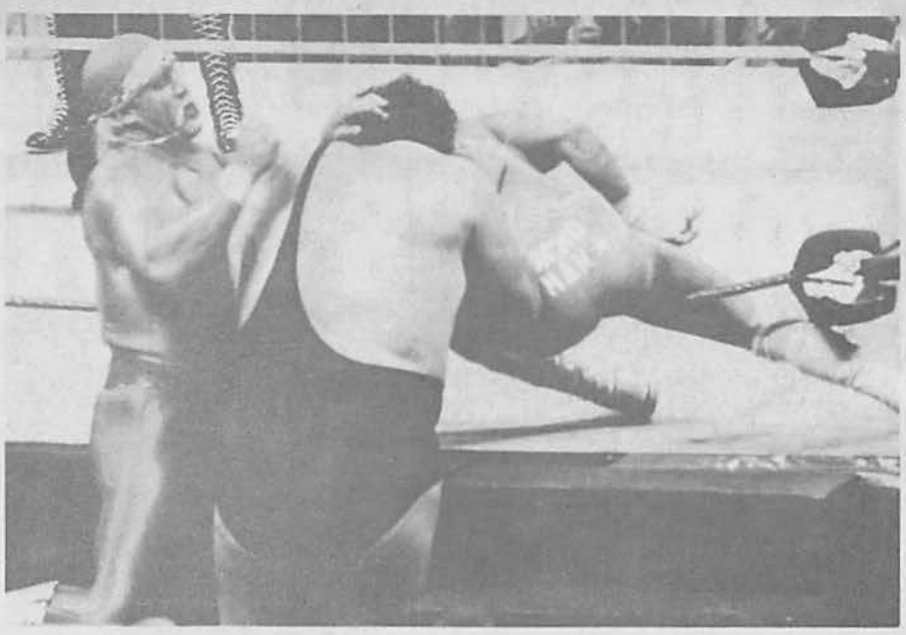
So, after a lengthy vacation, Hogan began wrestling Savage's top challengers.

And, after a match with the powerful "Hulkster," not many challengers have enough energy or will to face the "Macho Man."

"First you face Hogan," said Bam Bam Bigelow, who competed in the WrestleMania IV tournament and recently left the WWF for the NWA. "That's tough enough. I mean, he may not be the champ, but he's still *Hulk Hogan.* Then, if you survive that, you might get a shot at Savage. But by that time, you've got nothing left. Savage has it easy. It seems to me that *Hogan* has the tough job."

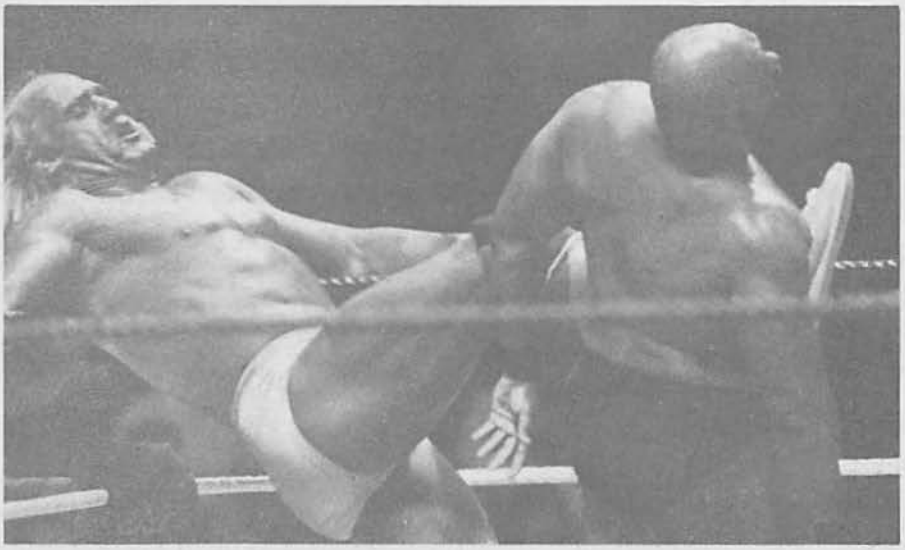
This point of view seems to be shared by Savage's top challengers, most of whom have already had exhausting matches with Hogan. Bad News Brown provides a good example.

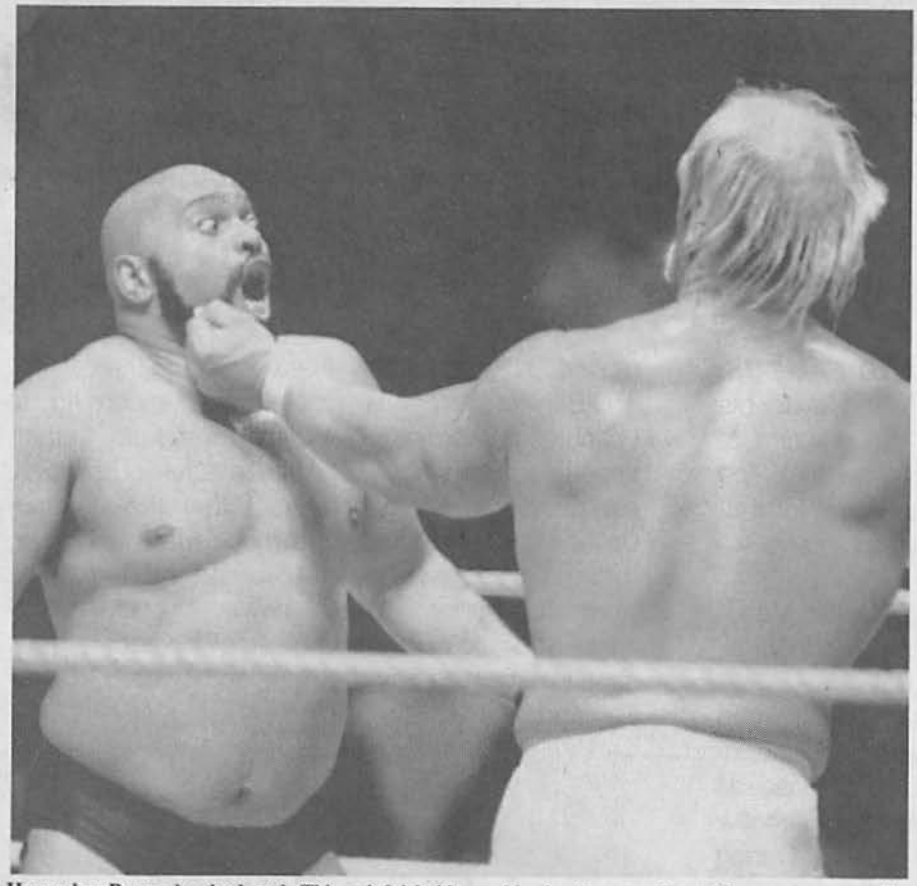
Brown was scheduled to begin a series of title matches against Savage on October 10 in Boston. By that time, however, Brown will have already wrestled Hogan several times. On one notable occasion at New Jersey's Byrne Meadowlands Arena, Hogan utilized his new motorcycle helmet as a vicious weapon. To Hogan, the means are unimportant as long as the mission—to slow down Brown and protect Savage—is accomplished. And when one of your tools is a foreign object, that mis-



Hulk Hogan stops Andre the Giant from interfering with Randy Savage during Savage's bid for the WWF World title at WrestleMania IV.

Hogan exhorts the fans to cheer for the new champion and his manager, Elizabeth (above). "The Hulkster" boots Bad News Brown in the head (below).





Hogan has Brown by the beard. This painful hold, combined with more devastating maneuvers, will make it harder for Brown to mount a serious challenge against the "Macho Man." To some, this makes Hogan look like Savage's protector.

Andre uses his enormous bulk to trap Hogan in the corner. If Hogan has that much trouble with Andre, Savage should have it worse.

sion is likely to succeed.

Other challengers face a similar fate. Hogan wrestles Ted DiBiase and Andre on a regular basis. And "The Hulkster" is scheduled to begin a series against another potential Savage challenger, Big Bossman.

By taking on Bossman, a relative newcomer to the WWF, Hogan will not only wear down the behemoth, but the ex-champ will also assess the challenger's strengths and weaknesses. Only after a series of matches against Hogan will Savage, buffered by the in-depth report from his bodyguard, grant Bossman a title shot.

By assimilating Hogan's analysis, any advantage Bossman might have had due to Savage's inexperience against him will be eliminated. Bossman will also be less effective against the champ after being brutalized by Hogan and—most likely—his steel-enforced helmet.

The bigger picture behind the shield of protection that surrounds Savage is one of image. How will the fans react to the "Macho Man" once they begin to understand how sheltered he is? One answer comes from Assistant Editor Eddie Ellner, who likens the WWF champion to NWA champion Ric Flair.

"Flair used to be a great champion," Ellner said. "But when he joined The Four Horsemen, he immediately got soft. I mean, he had a group of three people, four if you include J.J. Dillon, constantly sheltering him from viable challengers. Title hopefuls would have to wrestle Lex Luger or, later, Barry Windham, then survive tag team matches against Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson. And then, *if* he was able to survive interference from Dillon, he'd meet Flair. By that time, though, the 'challenger' doesn't pose much of a challenge.

"The minute I saw Flair was being sheltered by the Horsemen, I rejected his claim to greatness," Ellner continued. "By practicing Flair's style of defense, Savage will lose plenty of fans. What's next? Hogan, Ultimate Warrior, and Jake Roberts beating up Ted DiBiase outside the arena? Wrestling doesn't need another ring of protection like The Four Horsemen. It's demeaning to the sport, and it's demeaning to the championship itself."

The ever-outspoken Ellner addresses an important point. If Savage continues to rely on Hogan for protection, can a loss of championship stature be far behind? Granting challengers a fair title shot is the legacy of great champions like Bruno Sammartino, Pedro Morales, the younger Ric Flair, and even Hulk Hogan. Fans quickly accepted Savage as champion, but if he continues to dodge challengers until they are weakened by Hogan, fans might just as quickly begin to reject him.

And his bodyguard. □

MEDIA REVIEW

LIFESTYLES OF THE CRUEL AND FAMOUS: "The man is as cruel to guests as he is to his opponents in the ring." This was the reaction of Robin Leach, host of television's *Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous*, after filming a segment for that nationally syndicated program at the expansive estate of Ted DiBiase.

The segment featured the "Million-Dollar Man," his sexy French maid, and his bodyguard, Virgil, captured on film during a typical day.

Leach, who's been entertained by Hollywood superstars, multi-billion-dollar businessmen, and influential heads of state, characterized DiBiase as "an animal," and added in his exclusive interview with *PWI*, "the man has no heart at all!" During the segment, DiBiase repeatedly flaunted his wealth and comfort, all the while holding it just out of reach of his guest.

> ***"The dog was eating caviar, the bodyguard was drinking champagne, and I got zip!"***
> *—Robin Leach*

Lifestyles cameras followed DiBiase for an entire day. The segment showed the "Million-Dollar Man" as he characteristically ignored the pleas of a fallen and stranded bicyclist, cruelly rejected the requests of a raffle-selling Cub Scout, and continually refused to offer Leach any of the refreshments which he—and his dog!—repeatedly enjoyed.

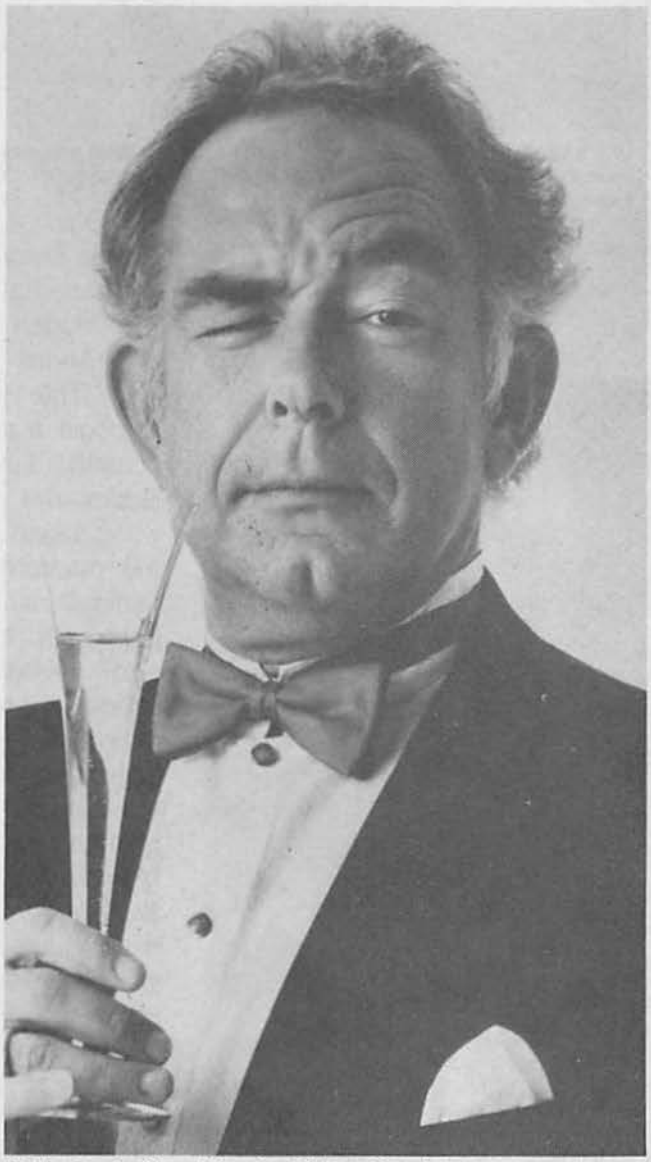
"The whole thing was baffling to me," Leach added about his subject's lack of hospitality. "The dog was eating caviar, the bodyguard was drinking champagne, and I got zip!" DiBiase clearly did not feel obligated to share the fruits of his riches with Leach.

"I never met a man I didn't like . . . until now! The man has no heart at all," Leach said. The entire segment did nothing to dispell the DiBiase myth of wealth, ego, *and* hostility.

"I love to see people humiliate themselves for my money," the "Million-Dollar Man" told a befuddled Leach. Indeed, when asked by Leach to name the nicest thing he'd ever done, DiBiase replied, "I granted this interview, didn't I?"

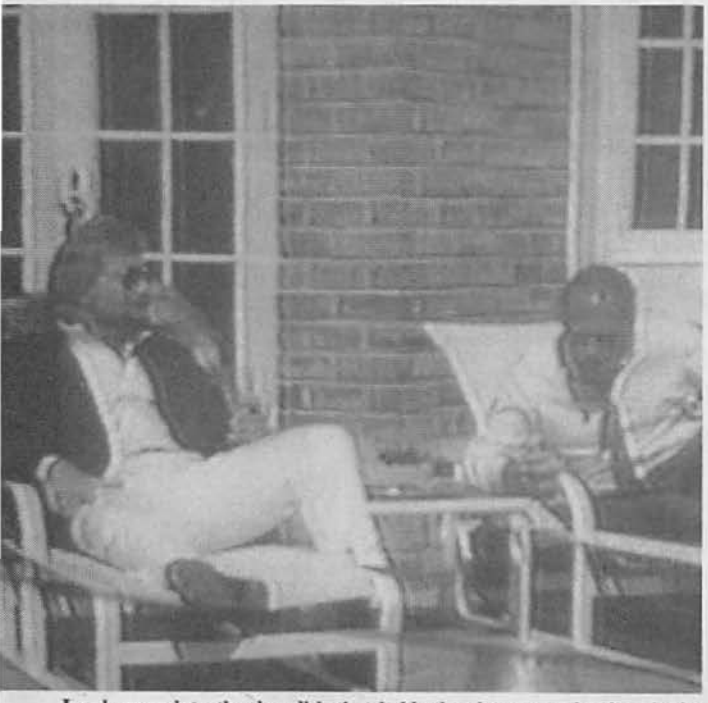
DiBiase's luxurious estate was, according to Leach, "extraordinary!" When questioned further, Leach, a man who's seen the estates of the richest people in the world, said that the "Million-Dollar Man" is clearly worth much more than that.

"I'd say, looking at the spread he has, he's worth 100 million." Leach, however, could not divulge the location of DiBiase's far-from-humble abode, except to say that it's "somewhere in New England."



Robin Leach did a *Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous* segment on "Million-Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase.

Every other month, "Media Review" will take a hard look at the way in which professional wrestling is presented on television and in the mainstream media. This in-depth behind-the-scenes look at the business side of wrestling will help you appreciate the sport from an entirely new perspective



Leach peers into the dog dish that holds the champagne he thought *he* would be drinking.

The palatial home was as luxurious as it was expansive. Fancy cars graced the driveway, fine furnishings decorated the interior, and the presence of wealth was pervasive. DiBiase even transformed the basement into a sprawling health center—complete with swimming treadmill—the likes of which would have even Jack LaLanne drooling.

"As far as our show is concerned," Leach said, "he's the ultimate for us. Wrestling's gotten so big nowadays that we wanted to show just how wealthy some of these guys can become. He's richer than most Hollywood stars.

"I'm a big wrestling fan, so this is a great honor for me," said Leach. His attraction to wrestling began at WrestleMania IV, which he attended as a special guest, bringing the WWF World belt to the ring prior to the title tournament in Atlantic City.

The *Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous* crew is scheduled to pay a visit to Hulk Hogan sometime in the spring. That segment will tentatively air during the first week of May. Leach is optimistic about the filming, but hopes Hogan will be slightly more hospitable than DiBiase.

—Gersh Kuntzman

32/3 = ? Pay-per-view mania has taken over, and now the question is: Are wrestling promoters overestimating the industry? We should have an answer to that question by the end of the year, thanks to an upcoming 32-day period during which three wrestling events will air on PPV TV.

The WWF will start things off with its second Survivor Series on November 24 from the Richfield (Ohio) Coliseum. Then the AWA will present its first PPV event, SuperClash III, on December 13 from the UIC Pavillion in Chicago. Then it's the NWA's Starrcade '88 on December 26 from the Richmond Coliseum.

Three cards were aired on PPV in 1987: WrestleMania III, The Survivor Series, and Starrcade. The three cards in 32 days will bring the total for 1988 to seven: The Bunkhouse Stampede, WrestleMania IV, Great American Bash, SummerSlam 88, The Survivor Series, SuperClash, and Starrcade.

And while the industry appears to be very healthy—the two most recent PPV shows, SummerSlam and the Bash, were successful—one has to wonder whether wrestling fans will shell out as much as $14.95 three times in one month to watch televised wrestling. Since the individual cable companies usually promote one event at a time, the WWF should have a huge edge over the other two events—not only because they're more experienced in the area of PPV, but also because they're scheduled first, on one of the most important TV days of the year: Thanksgiving.

The feeling here is that The Survivor Series will be at least the success it was last year (seven percent buy rate for 525,000 homes), because it will be unopposed by Starrcade. Starrcade will be less successful than The Great American Bash, and SuperClash will tread water.

This will be the the first pay-per-view event for the AWA, World Class, and CWA; most likely it will not be available in several major cities. They'll probably find out that being stuck in the middle won't be advantageous. But by the time Starrcade is held, most fans should be ready to pay for a PPV event once again.

—Dave Rosenbaum□

The Fans' Astonishing Message To Kevin Von Erich:

"WE LOVE YOU... RETIRE NOW!"

Controversy once again surrounds the Von Erichs. Kevin is presently recovering from post-concussion syndrome, a serious problem that could permanently affect his life. If his fans have anything to say about it, they'd prefer that Kevin never step into a wrestling ring again!

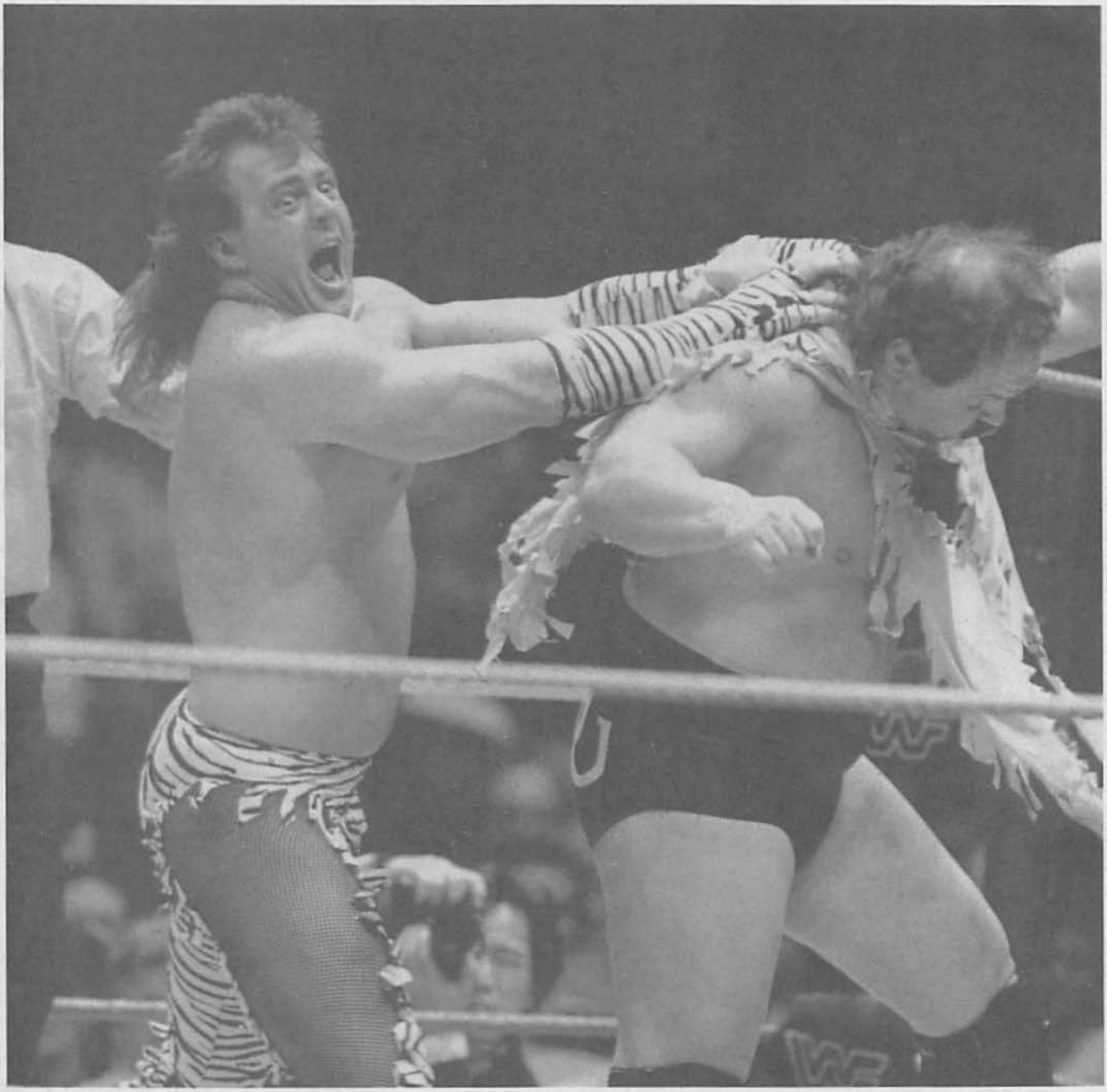
SOMETHING WAS WRONG. Very wrong. Even the fans could sense something was amiss.

"I came here to see Kevin Von Erich," said wrestling fan Bob Bollings after watching Von Erich team with Michael Hayes to defeat Spoiler and Adrian Street in Cleveland. "My wife and kids begged me to bring them after watching Kevin on TV for years. But he didn't seem right tonight. He seemed sluggish and distracted, like he was in pain or something. I was worried about the guy."

Bollings had good reason to worry. Von Erich took to the sidelines for several weeks following that September 3 match. At press time, he was readying himself for a return to the ring. As always, he's being guided by his desire to please his fans. But many of those same fans don't want to see Von Erich return—they want to see him retire!

(Continued on page 64)

Brutus Beefcake vs. Ron Bass:



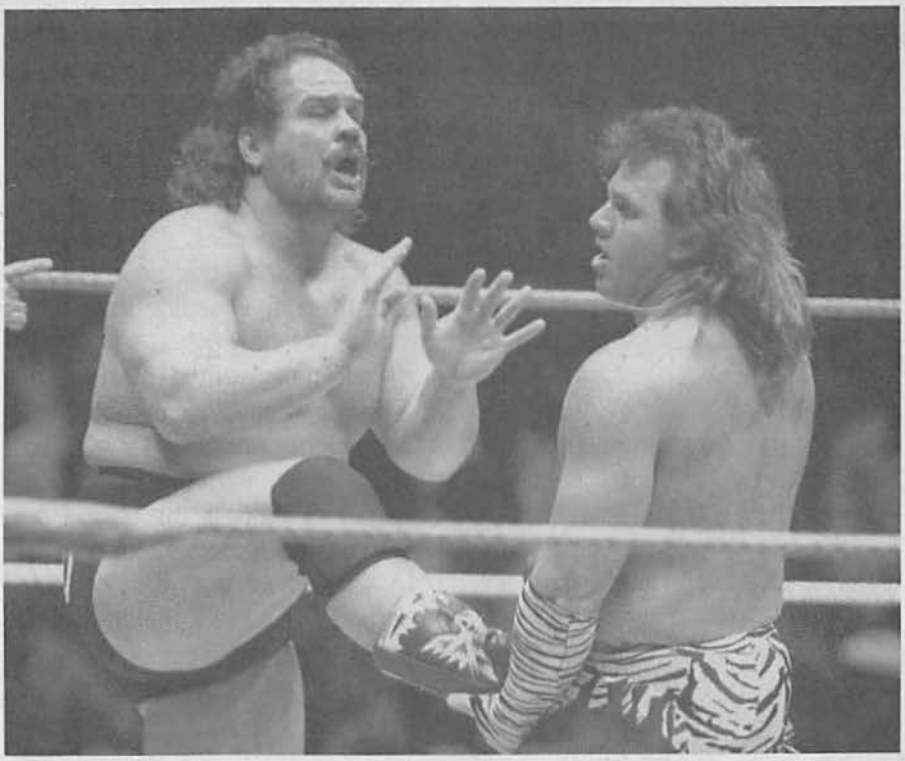
UNCENSORED— AND SENSELESS!

RON BASS STARTED it, and Brutus Beefcake intends to finish it—at any cost!

"It" is the violent feud that began when Bass brutally attacked "The Barber" with a set of spurs in early August. So much blood poured from Beefcake's forehead that WWF television producers chose to place a large red "X" over the screen when the confrontation was broadcast.

Beefcake's injury was so severe, he was forced to back out of his Intercontinental title match against The Honky Tonk Man at SummerSlam 88. His substitute, The Ultimate Warrior, destroyed Honky Tonk in 31 seconds to win the belt. That was the *real* start of Beefcake's problems.

For months, Beefcake had been Honky Tonk's top challenger, coming extremely close on many occasions to winning the WWF's penultimate singles title. The SummerSlam confrontation was billed as Beefcake's final shot at Honky Tonk. "The Barber" had focused all his energy on this last assault.



Brutus Beefcake wraps his shirt around Ron Bass' neck (opposite page) and stops a kick to the midsection (above). Beefcake was well on his way to the Intercontinental title—until Bass sidetracked him in this violent feud.

The bloodbath that was censored on television is now coming to an arena near you! It's Brutus Beefcake's scissors against the bullwhip and spurs of Ron Bass. No one knows for sure who will win, but one thing is certain: If these maniacs don't stop, they'll end each other's careers!

Then came Bass.

Formerly a star in the Mid-Atlantic and Florida areas, Bass was becoming disgusted with his status in the WWF. His past meant nothing as he was continually passed over for title shots and relegated to prelim bouts. The big "Outlaw" knew he had to make a big career move—and fast. He decided to go after Beefcake because, in the words of a close friend, "he hates pretty boys, and Beefcake is the ultimate pretty boy."

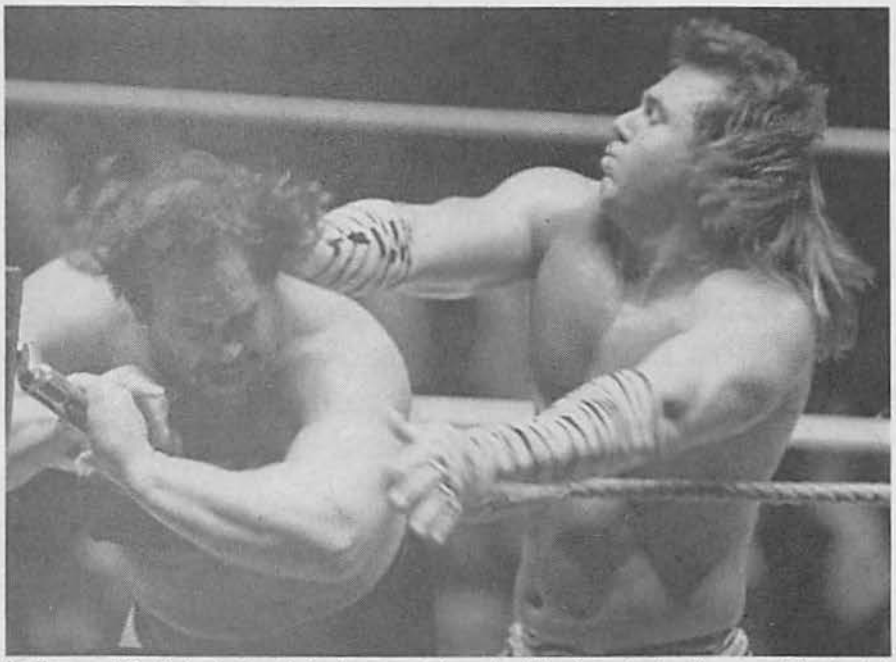
So now Bass has the major feud he hopes will propel him to further

Bass smashes Beefcake's head into the turnbuckle. In Beefcake, Bass saw an opportunity to improve his standing in the WWF. He thought "The Barber" would be an easy touch, but he couldn't have been more wrong—Brutus is out for blood!

fame—or infamy. His goal is to inflict as much punishment as possible on Beefcake before taking on the next challenge. What little respect he has for "The Barber" he intends to erase during the course of this feud.

But Beefcake won't let him off that easy.

"Brutus has one thing in mind: beat Bass," says Assistant Editor Andy Rodriguez. "One look in his eyes and you can see that that's *all* he wants to do. Nobody in his career has ever gotten under his skin like that. After what Bass has done to him, it's easy to understand his attitude."



As Bass and Beefcake battle, their chances at championship glory slowly slip away. The feud is exciting in and of itself, but it's having very little impact on the fortunes of World champion Randy Savage or Intercontinental titlist The Ultimate Warrior.

A Beefcake-Bass encounter live at the arena is a chance for fans to see firsthand the brutality that made even the most hardened mat observers wince and shudder. A recent match at Madison Square Garden was a good example of the kind of destruction that has been going on.

Over the course of 10 minutes, Bass attacked Beefcake before the bell, and threw a chair in the ring; Beefcake pulled a pair of scissors out of his boot; Bass hit Beefcake with his bullwhip; Beefcake put Bass in a sleeper; Bass choked Beefcake with his whip, then tried to use his spurs on Beefcake again, until The Rockers ran in to save "The Barber."

"Boy, that's excitement!" said Rita McReynold, a fan who attended the Garden card. "Those guys really hate each other, don't they? That wasn't a wrestling match, it was a street brawl."

"Man, they wanted to rip each other's lungs out!" screamed Geoffrey Dawkins, another Garden fan. "I hope Beefcake wins this feud, because he really is the best. Bass knows he isn't good enough."

In arenas across the country, Bass and Beefcake's matches have reached similar levels of sheer violence. Back and forth it goes, with neither man gaining a clear advantage. At this point, Beefcake has just about given up on winning the Intercontinental belt, let alone the World title. He is totally obsessed with the Texas outlaw.

"What Brutus doesn't realize is that Bass has him under his control," Rodriguez said. "Bass suckered Beefcake into this feud, and Beefcake was a willing—and unknowing—victim. His fans should let him know this isn't what they want. They want a title and, ultimately, so does he."

Maybe "ultimately" is a poor choice of words. It would remind Beefcake of The Ultimate Warrior, the I-C champion. Beefcake realizes that he won't get a shot at the belt as long as the Warrior holds it. WWF matchmakers would not dare pit two such popular men against each other. So "The Barber" is in championship limbo. He knows that his title shots are slipping away, but he remains unwilling to end his bloody feud with Bass.

"It's really unfortunate for Beefcake," says Assistant Editor Bob Smith. "Six months ago, he looked like a cinch to win Honky Tonk's belt, but now he's caught in a feud that has no foreseeable end. A once-promising wrestler is headed straight to the bottom of the ratings."

But it takes two to feud, and Bass' career is also endangered by this confrontation.

"Ron is finding out very quickly that Beefcake isn't the soft touch he thought he would be," said an anonymous friend. "Believe me, though he'd never admit it to the public, Bass has new respect for 'The Barber,' fancy clothes and all. Ron got a lot more than he bargained for in this one. It's definitely one of the toughest feuds of his career."

So tough, in fact, that if Bass doesn't come out on top, he'll slip off the ladder of contention as fast as he climbed it. His carefully conceived plan will have backfired, and he'll once again become lost in the infamous WWF shuffle.

Unfortunately for Bass, he doesn't look like a winner in this one, but neither does Beefcake. They continue to ignore the advice of their friends and supporters to fight a war that has already received the WWF's seal of disapproval.

But in this war, there will be no winners or losers, only survivors. And in professional wrestling, mere survival isn't good enough. □

THIS MONTH IN...

The Wrestler

The beat goes on: Can **JIMMY HART** make **THE ROUGEAUS** WWF World champions?

They've destroyed **THE FOUR HORSEMEN** and taken their belts, but **THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS** *still* must prove themselves!

PLUS . . .

When **ANDRE THE GIANT** savaged **RANDY SAVAGE**, where was **HULK HOGAN**? . . . **TERRY GORDY** takes on **SKANDOR AKBAR'S** army . . . "Q & A" interview with **KEVIN VON ERICH** . . . "Spotlight" on **THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR** . . . **THE TOP GUNS** misfire against **BAD COMPANY** . . . Introducing **DUSTIN RHODES**

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in the January 1989 issue of
The Wrestler

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Inside Wrestling

Learn the 10 reasons why **STING** can't beat **BARRY WINDHAM**

Memo to the WWF: It's time to ban the helmet—or ban **HULK HOGAN**!

PLUS . . .

MEGABUCKS, **MEGAPOWERS**, Megaconfusion! Who you'll cheer and jeer in '89! . . . Exclusive "Hotseat" interview with **ARN ANDERSON**: "**THE FOUR HORSEMEN** were a dynasty, but it's all over now!" . . . **THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS** must split up—or shut up! . . . **KERRY VON ERICH** and **JERRY LAWLER**: Tag Team of the Year or Feud of the Year? . . . **SGT. SLAUGHTER** and **COL. DeBEERS** go "One On One"

All this and much more . . .
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Inside Wrestling

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(Continued from page 7)

favorite), but just think Sting is better.

I know Sting is young, but he is the greatest wrestler today; in a few years, he will be unstoppable. I would even venture to say that he will be able to beat any challenger for the world belt that he will certainly hold.

KEVIN BERRY
Cayce, SC

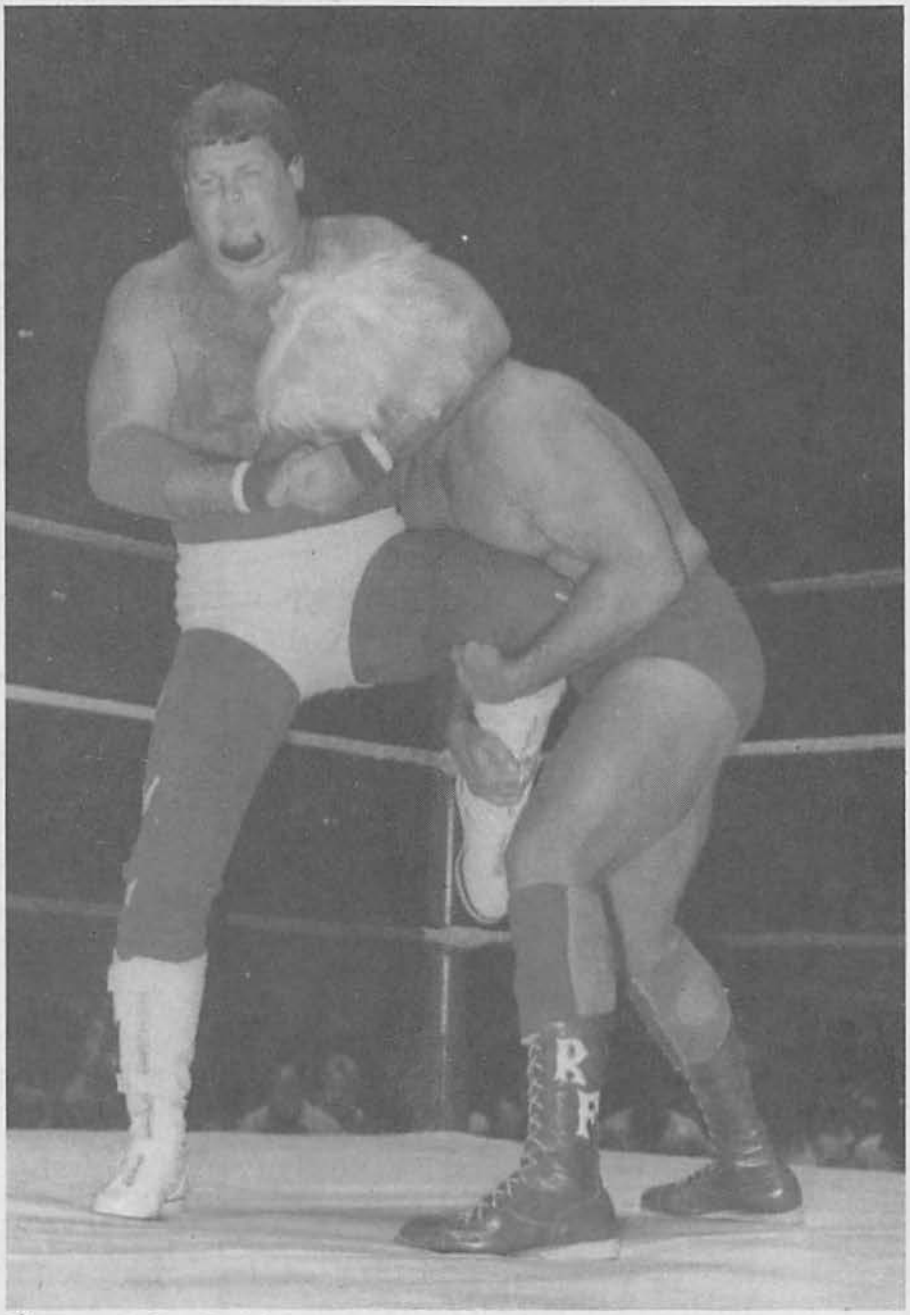
A KING'S COCKINESS

After reading your article in the December 1988 issue of *PWI* ("AWA World Champion Jerry Lawler: 'I've Beaten Savage And Flair—I'm The Best!' "), let me point out that "The King" is a good competitor and has worked hard for almost 20 years to win a major title. I will give him credit for that.

But how can he come out and say that he's the best just because he beat Ric Flair and Randy Savage? What an egotistical pig!

I have a suggestion. I would love nothing more than a steel cage, title vs. title tournament among Flair, Savage, and Lawler. I'm sure all fans want to see this, too.

PHILIP BRUNO
New York



Ric Flair grabs Jerry Lawler's leg in an attempt to break the headlock. In Philip Bruno's opinion, Lawler should not brag that he is the best just because he has defeated Flair and Randy Savage. Bruno suggests a tournament to settle the matter.

TWO-TIMING TURNCOATS

I am writing this letter after watching the third Clash of the Champions card from Albany, Georgia. I was really surprised when Paul Jones attacked the greatest athlete to ever come out of the Soviet Union. I am, of course, referring to "The Russian Bear," Ivan Koloff. I may not like the man *personally*, but I do respect him professionally.

When I think back to what Paul Jones and The Russian Assassins did to Ivan, my blood boils. To think that Jones would turn against the man who brought him the NWA six-man tag team title makes me sick.

Ivan Koloff didn't need to prove himself to anyone, let alone a two-bit twerp like Jones. As I stated before, I may not like him personally, but I respect him as a pro. And Jones, if you're reading this, you better keep one eye looking over your shoulder, because Ivan Koloff will be gaining on you.

STEVE HART
Saybrook, IL

TROUBLE BREWING

I've been watching Varsity Club matches recently, and I want to go on record and predict an imminent breakup. In every match that features Rick Steiner, both Kevin Sullivan and Mike Rotundo are forced to scold their partner repeatedly. I don't know how much longer the trio can remain together when they are constantly bicker-

(Continued on page 52)

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October 1982/COLOR PINUP: Jerry Lawler. **Ric Flair,** Rhodes, Graham, Race, Funk Jr.

January 1983/COLOR PINUP: Ken Patera. **Rick Steamboat,** Rich, Brody, Sullivan, Backlund.

February 1983/COLOR PINUP: Ivan Putski. **Rhodes vs. Garvin,** Snuka, Super Destroyer, Bockwinkel, Funk.

April 1983/COLOR PINUP: Superstar Graham. **Mil Mascaras,** Valentine, Orndorff, Hart.

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July 1984/COLOR PINUP: Paul Ellering. **Jimmy Valiant,** JYD, Fab Ones, Gagne, Windham.

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January 1985/COLOR PINUP: Tito Santana. **Road Warriors,** Billy Jack, Hayes, 1984 fan ballot.

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April 1985/COLOR PINUP: Ronnie Garvin, **Jimmy Snuka,** Warriors, Gordy, Flair, Rhodes.

June 1985/COLOR PINUP: Barry Windham. **Dusty Rhodes,** Slaughter, Hogan, Von Erich, T.A.

MAY 1987

July 1985/COLOR PINUP: Sgt. Slaughter. **Hogan vs. Piper,** Warriors, One Man Gang, T.A., Martel.

September 1985/COLOR PINUP: Junkyard Dog. **Magnum T.A,** Von Erich, Hogan, AWA scouting reports.

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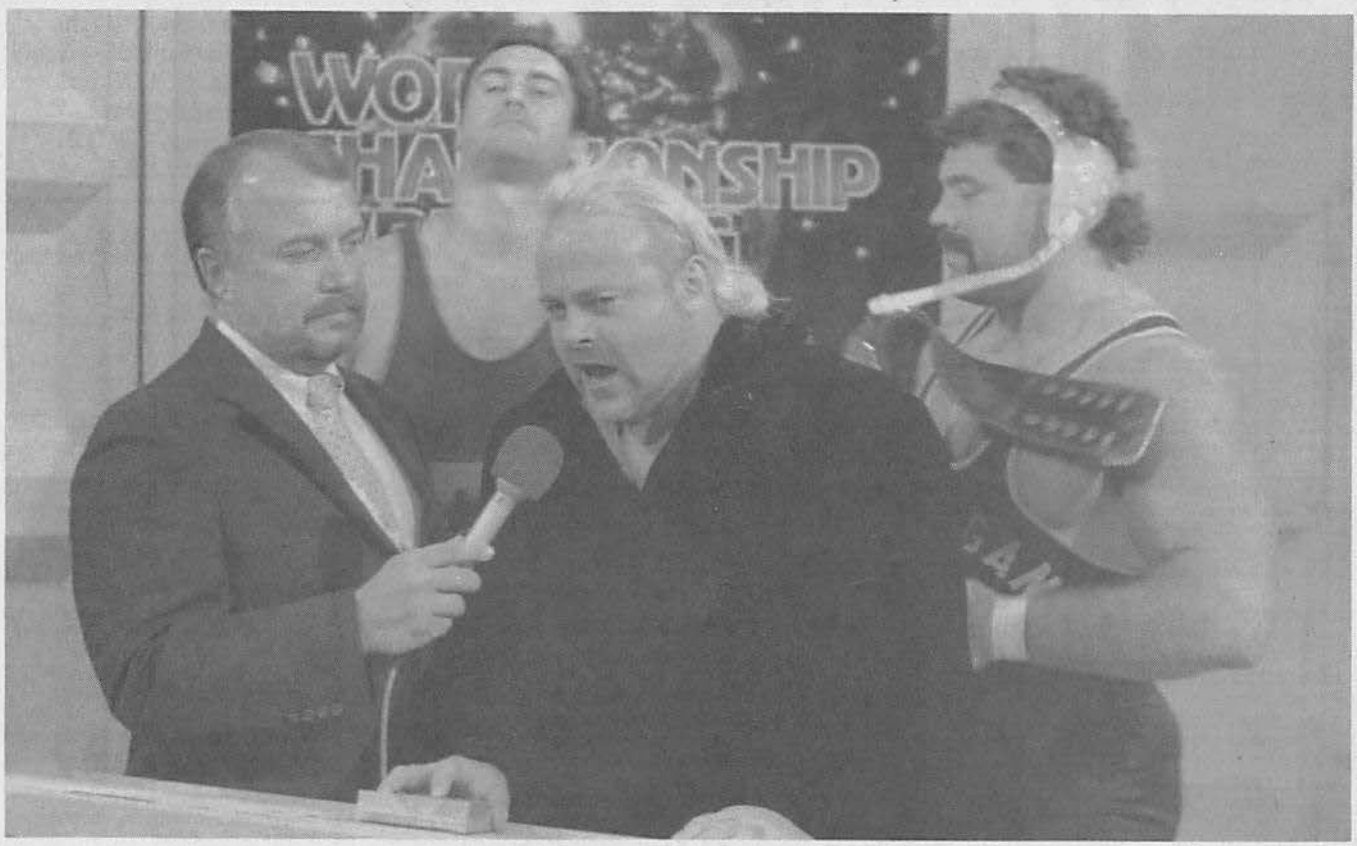

David Crockett interviews Kevin Sullivan as The Varsity Club waits their turn. Reader Debbie Keller thinks Mike Rotundo and Rick Steiner's constant arguing will eventually lead to their breakup.

ing amongst themselves.

I know Rotundo and Steiner like to joke with each other and say that all their arguments are like the arguments of two brothers. Well, I think someone should tell those two that families sometimes split up. Brothers turn against brothers plenty of times, believe me.

What The Varsity Club needs is some honest brotherly love, not this unwarranted hostility. I would like to see the Club survive, but at this point I don't think they will. That's too bad, because Rotundo and Steiner are two of the best wrestlers in the NWA.

DEBBIE KELLER
Paris, KY

PLEASE EXPLAIN

Would someone please explain why Ric Flair is constantly rated either number one or number two in *PWI's* Top 10? As Craig Peters pointed out in your December 1988 issue, Flair is number one in "cowardly self-disqualification in order to save his title." This comment alone proves that Flair no longer utilizes his scientific skills to win, but to simply survive as champion. Is this the mark of a great wrestler? Mr. Peters compared The Honky Tonk Man's reign to that of Flair's. Honky Tonk was a terrible champion, and an analogy between the two only makes Flair look worse.

In the absence of Blanchard and Anderson, Flair can redeem himself. It's unlikely that without his Horsemen bodyguards he will be able to hold his title except by pinfall. But until he proves that he can hold his title fairly, I'll continue to root for Randy Savage and Jerry Lawler—wrestling's *real* champions!

BILL STRONG
Bristol, CT □

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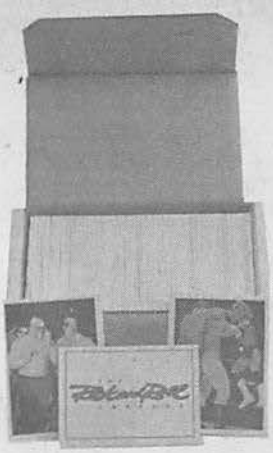

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(Continued from page 12)

Dusty Rhodes' friends help him celebrate his NWA World title victory in 1979. Stu Saks laments that this kind of camaraderie is lacking among today's wrestlers.

priorities than someone like, say, Dusty Rhodes. Rhodes began in the sport in the late-'60s, a time of social consciousness. Dusty experienced the revolution spurred by racial unrest and the Vietnam war. Regardless of his own political bent, he was a product of the times and couldn't help but be affected by the times. In general, people cared about what was happening to others. Today they care about how things that are happening will affect *them*. "Would I have had any trouble recruiting forces back then?" Dusty asks, repeating my question. "There's no need to answer in hypothetical terms. The answer is no."

Lex Luger and Sting and Nikita Koloff—and others—all give the appearance of being supportive of one another. After Luger's apparent title win over NWA champion Ric Flair at the Baltimore Bash, Sting, Williams, and Koloff rushed into the ring for the victory celebration. It was a front. They were there because it would have looked bad for them if they weren't. Sure, they hugged Luger and shook his hand. But when the decision was turned and Luger was ruled to have lost on cuts, there wasn't a disappointed face among Lex's friends.

The path to Flair's title was still clear. Now it was really time to celebrate.

I remember 1979, when Dusty Rhodes won the NWA World title from Harley Race. The celebration in the dressing room was spontaneous and sincere. There were no TV cameras around, just a bunch of guys—Don Serrano, Steve Keirn, Manny Fernandez, Jack Brisco, Buzz Sawyer—who were legitimately happy for their buddy. It was a precious moment when the boys surrounded "The Dream" and poured their beers on his head.

Somehow I doubt that, once back in the dressing room and away from the TV cameras, there would have been much of a party for Luger had the decision gone his way.

The NWA favorites should consider themselves lucky that The Four Horsemen appear to have self-destructed. As a group, they did little to force the situation.

That is, except for Dusty Rhodes. He is from another generation. A generation that has, I'm sad to say, gone the way of the dinosaurs. □

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November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Piper, Blair.

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January 1983/Stories include: Putski, Muraco, Windham, Bockwinkel.

February 1983/Stories include: Bockwinkel, Backlund, Rich, Kamala.

April 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Tiger Mask, Sammartino, Bundy.

May 1983/Stories include: Samoans, Von Erich, Rhodes, Orndorff.

June 1983/Stories include: Windham, Martel, Brody, Andre.

July 1983/Stories include: Flair, Adonis, Sullivan, Zbyszko.

August 1983/Stories include: Valentine, Blanchard, Windham, Street.

September 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Ellering, Von Erich, Briscos.

October 1983/Stories include: Race, Sawyer, Briscos, Bass.

November 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Santana, Von Erichs, Kabuki.

December 1983/Stories include: Mascaras, Superstar, Von Erich, Zbyszko.

January 1984/Stories include: Valentine, Hogan, Von Erich, Road Warriors.

March 1984/Stories include: Santana, Hogan, Von Erich, Sawyers.

April 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Ellering, Von Erich, Rhodes.

May 1984/Stories include: Windham, Brody, Road Warriors, Junkyard Dog.

June 1984/Stories include: Von Erich, Billy Jack, Flair, Armstrong.

July 1984/Stories include: Rich, Billy Jack, Valiant, Von Erich.

August 1984/Stories include: Garvin, Sullivan, Freebirds, Street.

September 1984/Stories include: Von Erich, Piper, Steamboat, Billy Jack.

October 1984/Stories include: Flair, Rhodes, Magnum T.A., Bundy.

November 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Von Erich, Piper, Brody.

December 1984/Stories include: Martel, Santana, Von Erich, Steamboat.

JANUARY 1985

January 1985/Stories include: Von Erich, Warriors, Albano, Koloffs.

February 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Santana, Billy Jack, Nikita Koloff.

March 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Warriors, Martel, Rude.

April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Von Erich-Adams, Flair, Tonga & Snuka.

May 1985/Stories include: Warriors. Backlund, Santana, Rich.

June 1985/Stories include: Rhodes, Windham, Rich, Hogan.

July 1985/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Reed, Martel, Sunshine.

August 1985/BONUS 4-PG. COLOR SECTION! Plus: Warriors, Magnum T.A., Sheik & Volkoff, McGraw.

September 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Savage, R&R Express.

October 1985/Stories include: Flair, Windham, Shultz, Martel.

November 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Zbyszko, R&R Express, Von Erichs.

December 1985/Stories include: Rude, Fantastics, Muraco, Uncle Elmer.

January 1986/20th Anniversary Issue! 10 Greatest Wrestlers, Rhodes, Hogan, Sammartino.

February 1986/Stories include: Hogan, Orndorff, Flair, Hansen.

March 1986/Stories include: Von Erich, Duggan, Hansen-Martel.

April 1986/Stories include: Von Erich, Rude, Lugar, Hogan, Magnum T.A.

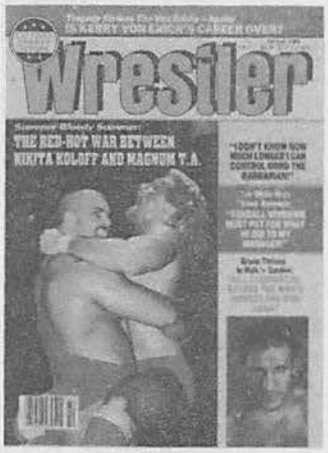
May 1986/Stories include: Zbyszko, Von Erichs, Santana-Ventura, Hillbillies.

June 1986/Stories include: Lugar, Hernandez, Flair-Bockwinkel, Hogan, T.A.

July 1986/Stories include: King Kong Bundy, Koloff vs. Graham, Ric Flair.

August 1986/Stories include: Snuka, Bulldogs, Freebirds, Warriors, Duggan.

September 1986/Stories include: Fantastics, Adonis, Morton-Flair, Brody.



OCTOBER 1986

October 1986/Stories include: Nikita-Magnum, Nord, Bruno, Kerry, Windham.

November 1986/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan-Orndorff, Von Erich.

December 1986/Stories include: Flair, Bockwinkel, Hogan, Gilbert, Nikita.

January 1987/Stories include: Heenan, Garvins, DiBiase, Borne & Sawyer.

February 1987/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Gordy, Steamboat-Roberts.

March 1987/Stories include: Windham, Nikita, Adias, Savage-Steamboat.

April 1987/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Rich-Lawler, R&R Express.

May 1987/Stories include: Flair-Nikita, Andre-Hogan, UWF, Windham, Hennig.

June 1987/Stories include: Flair-Windham, Can-Ams, Rhodes-Murdoch.

July 1987/Stories include: Cornette, Hyatt, Luger, Harts, Adams, Hansen.

August 1987/Stories include: Can-Ams, Luger vs. Nikita, Fantastics, Koko, Nord.

September 1987/Stories include: Koloffs, Harts, Duggan, Hennig, Hart.

October 1987/Stories include: Savage-Honky Tonk, Horsemen, Patera, Kerry.

November 1987/Stories include: Williams, Luger, Hogan-Khan, Rich.

December 1987/Stories include: Hogan, Windham, Lawler, Flair, Beefcake.

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March 1988/Stories include: Hogan, Luger-Sting, Calgary, Demolition.

April 1988/Special issue! Starrcade '87, Survivor Series, AWA & World Class. Also: Strike Force, Luger, Rockers.

May 1988/Stories include: Horsemen, Hogan, Flair, Fantastics, DiBiase.

June 1988/Stories include: Sting-Flair, DiBiase, Kerry, Nikita, Zenk.

July 1988/Stories include: Fantastics, Hogan, Windham, McMahon, Rich.

August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Windham-Luger split, Demolition, Lawler, Ellering.

September 1988/Stories include: Duggan vs. Andre, Hogan, Windham.

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November 1988/Stories include: Midnight Ex., DiBiase, Bossman, Brody.

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(Continued from page 16)

NWA has attempted a PPV show.

But back to the announcement. I don't have to ask *why* NWA President Jim Crockett and WWF head Vince McMahon Jr. weren't sitting next to AWA President Stanley Blackburn, CWA promoter Jerry Jarrett, World Class official Frank Dusek, and POWW head David McLane. I *know* why: Crockett and McMahon continue to operate under the notion that they're stronger on their own, and that operating a business means never working with the competition, even if it could strengthen both sides involved.

So, with this in mind, let's ignore what a Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage—or Savage-Lawler, or Flair-Lawler—match would mean for the sport of professional wrestling. That's not the point. Let's instead concentrate on what such a match would do for McMahon's and Crockett's respective pocketbooks. That's *really* the bottom line, not the good of the sport.

Savage vs. Flair—or even better, Hulk Hogan vs. Flair—would easily fill a baseball or football stadium in any major wrestling area (New York, Detroit, Toronto, North Carolina, Georgia). The pay-per-view numbers would be phenomenal. It would absolutely be the most lucrative card ever held in this country, far surpassing WrestleMania III.

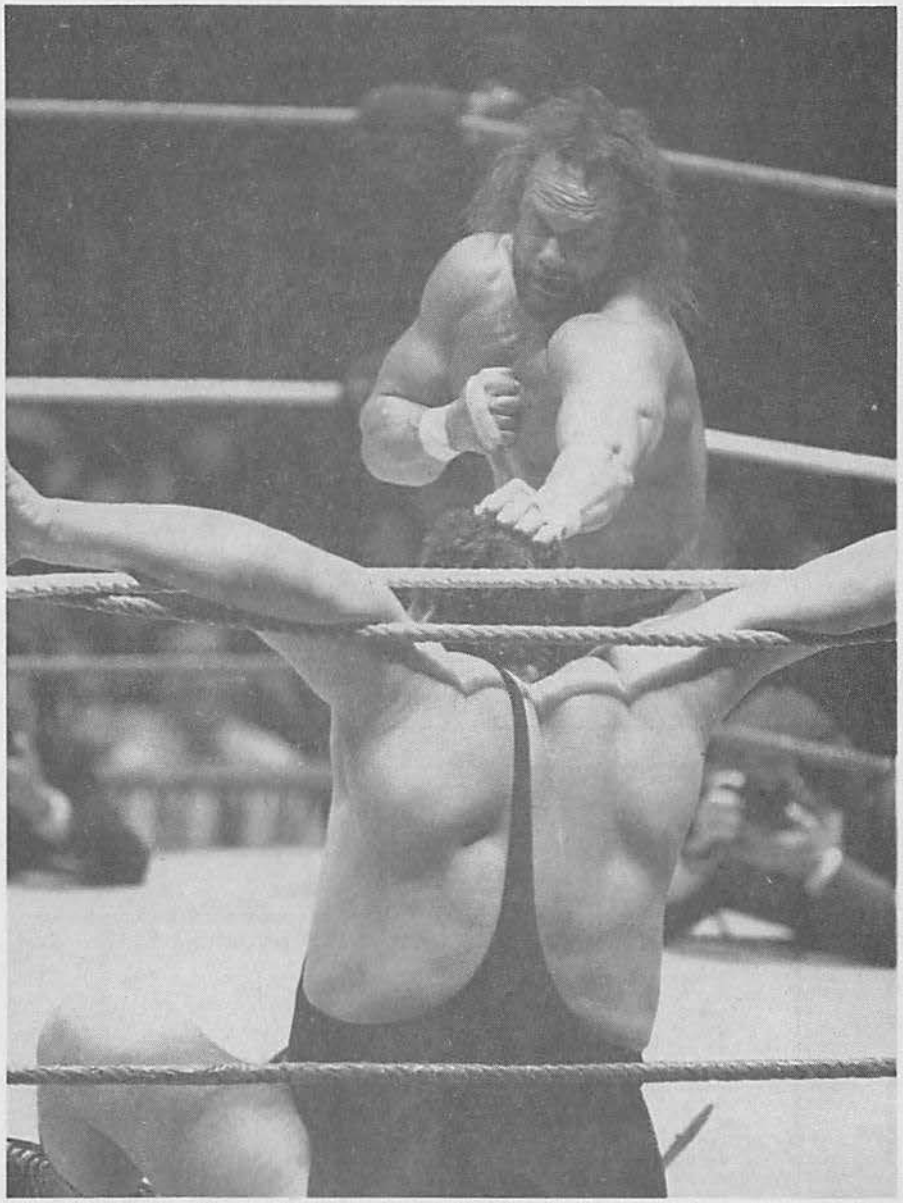
Savage and Flair wouldn't even have to put up their belts. Is there a wrestling fan that wouldn't pay to see a Savage-Flair or Hogan-Flair non-title match? And how about a one-day, non-title tournament involving Savage, Flair, Hogan, Lawler, Lex Luger, Sting, and Kerry Von Erich? The potential is staggering. The WWF's hunger for money and national attention would be satiated.

Afterward, of course, the NWA and WWF could go right on ignoring one another. Their brief alliance would be for the most selfish of means: a quick, big payday. The NWA wouldn't have to acknowledge that Bam Bam Bigelow was formerly in the WWF. The WWF wouldn't have to acknowledge that Ted DiBiase, The Midnight Rockers, Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson, and so many of its other big stars, were big stars *before* they came to the WWF.

They'd return to the status quo with money in their pockets and a smile on the fans' faces.

Obviously, the AWA, World Class, and CWA heads have all realized that their potential for profit is stronger as a unit. And they're really not looking to compete with the NWA and WWF with SuperClash III. They're merely trying to get in on the action.

So, on Thanksgiving night, the WWF will present The Survivor Series on pay-per-view. Then on December 13, SuperClash III will be on pay-per-view. Finally, on December 26, the NWA will wrap



WWF World champion Randy Savage has Andre the Giant trapped between the ropes. Dave Rosenbaum speculates that if Savage ever faced Ric Flair or Lawler, the match would be a phenomenal moneymaker.

up this 32-day pay-fest with Starrcade '88.

Three different shows, three different sites, and a total waste of time when one big show would eclipse all three combined in terms of live gate, pay-per-view take, and money and interest generated.

If you want to watch all three shows, it will cost approximately $50.

What a pair of pigheads McMahon and Crockett are. Imagine being so bent on proving that no other federation exists—that the wrestling world revolves around the WWF or the NWA—that not even the prospect of the biggest payday in the sport's history can make them change their ways. Meanwhile, the fans will eventually get so frustrated watching the same wrestlers and the same matchups that they'll eventually switch to the other federations.

I'm sick of watching Flair vs. Luger. If I never saw Savage-Andre once, I wouldn't have missed it. Hogan-Andre? Neither man can wrestle. I've seen Jake Roberts vs. Rick Rude, The Fantastics vs. The Sheepherders, and The Midnight Express vs. The Road Warriors dozens of times. Of course, I've also seen plenty of Lawler-Von Erich matches, but the fact that they're title vs. title matches keeps them new.

And don't we all want to see something new?

Well, it looks like I've just wasted about 750 words discussing something that will never happen. Fans have been clamoring for WWF vs. NWA matches for years, the press has demanded it, but McMahon and Crockett have made no overtures to one another.

That's okay.

If I had to pick one of the three pay-per-view cards to watch, it would be SuperClash III.

The other two are just repeats. □

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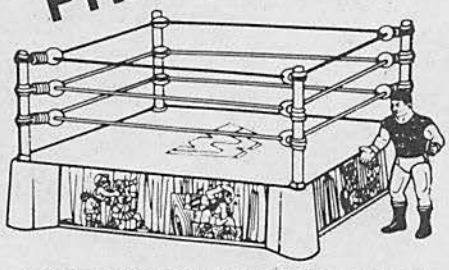

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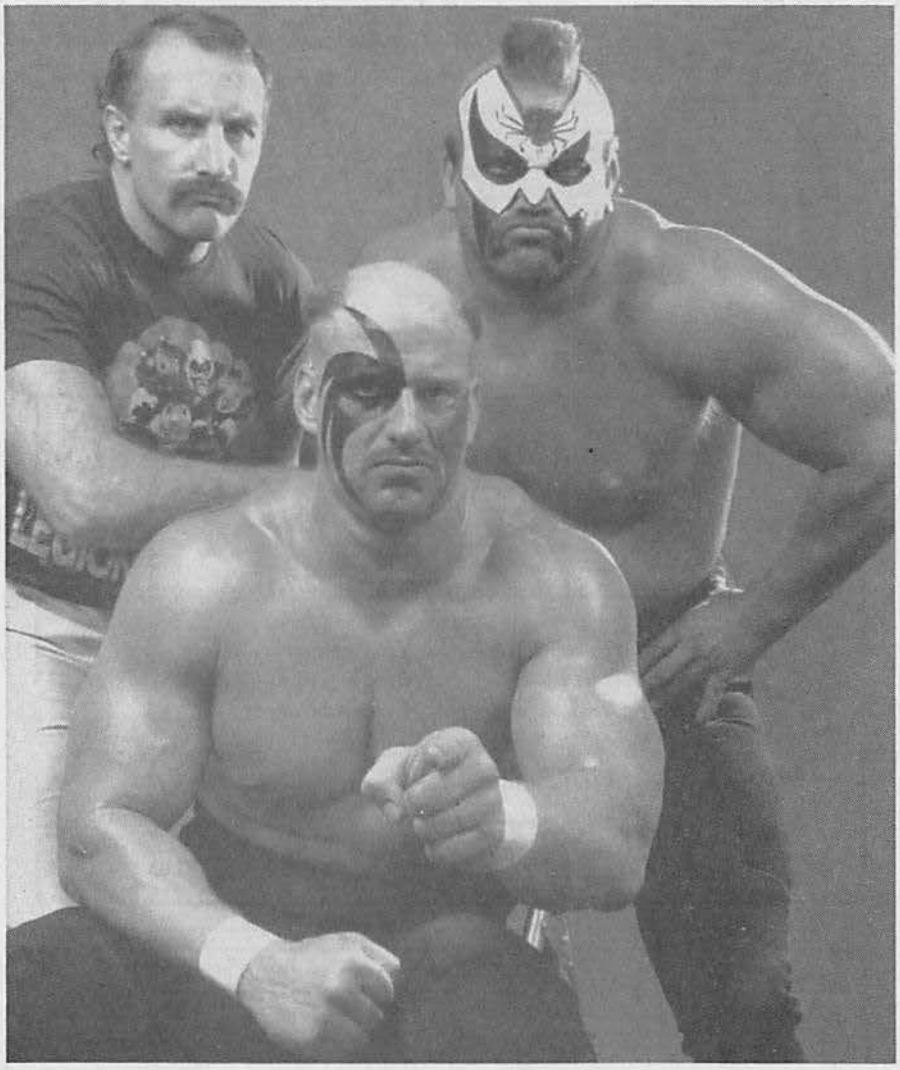

Don't worry about The Road Warriors. Before long they'll have the NWA World tag team title and all doubts about their ability and toughness will be erased. The Midnight Express are very good, but the Warriors are still the greatest in the NWA.

would find the competition challenging, especially in the primary grades. Taylor has always vacilated between being a Wimpering Pansy and Cowardly Thug. I'm confident he would find his niche in the schoolyard, where bigger is better, and where he'd outweigh most of his opponents by 200 pounds.

Dear Ellner,

I hate to destroy your favorite illusion, but The Road Warriors are a couple of spineless, soft-bellied wimps. The reason is simple: They have not wrestled a single match for the NWA World tag title since Starrcade '87. Since the Warriors are consistently recognized as top contenders by both the NWA and your magazine, The Legion of Doom certainly would encounter no trouble in obtaining a title shot. They want to be World champs, but Hawk and Animal are too frightened of Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson to challenge them. So, they content themselves by a series of boring feuds. My suggestion is that The Legion of Doom get their cowardly butts out of the NWA.

PETE CARLUCCI
Charlotte, NC

Dear Pete,

My favorite illusion is that my readers can walk and chew gum at the same time, a notion your letter quickly dispels. Undoubtedly, the Warriors covet the World tag team belts. It's been their unpleasant experience, however, to have their popularity and talents exploited by greedy promoters who prefer to have the Warriors *seeking* the belts rather than *defending* them. Countless times the Warriors' efforts in title matches have been thwarted by incompetent officiating and outright cheating by their opponents. Ellering finally tired of the charade and took his troops to Japan, where the trio captured the All-Japan International tag title in near-record time. To suggest Hawk and Animal fear Blanchard and Anderson is absurd, although proving it in light of the Horsemen's defection to the WWF would be difficult. Not to fear: Now that the Warriors' favorite whipping boys—The Midnight Express—hold the crown, I see The Legion of Doom wrestling for—and capturing—the belts in the very near future.

Dear Eddie,

Two questions: Do you think The Megapowers could defeat Sting and Lex Luger? How do you think Ultimate Warrior would fare against Sting?

KEVIN CALOCA
Half Moon Bay, CA

Dear Kevin,

One answer: Sting would be on the winning side in both matches. Sting has complemented his weightroom training with an exacting repertoire of scientific maneuvers. Ultimate Warrior has remained a lump of muscle, the thickest being the one between his ears. Sting would simply outsmart and outclass his former tag team partner. Though Savage would match up well against Sting or Luger (don't think Vince McMahon doesn't salivate at the thought of such encounters), Hulk Hogan would be unable to keep pace with either challenger. Both are stronger, faster, and smarter than the ex-champion. Hogan's ego (read: his fear of embarrassment) would make the match worth watching, but in the end look for the NWA boys to prevail. □

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AUGUST 1984

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(Continued from page 10)

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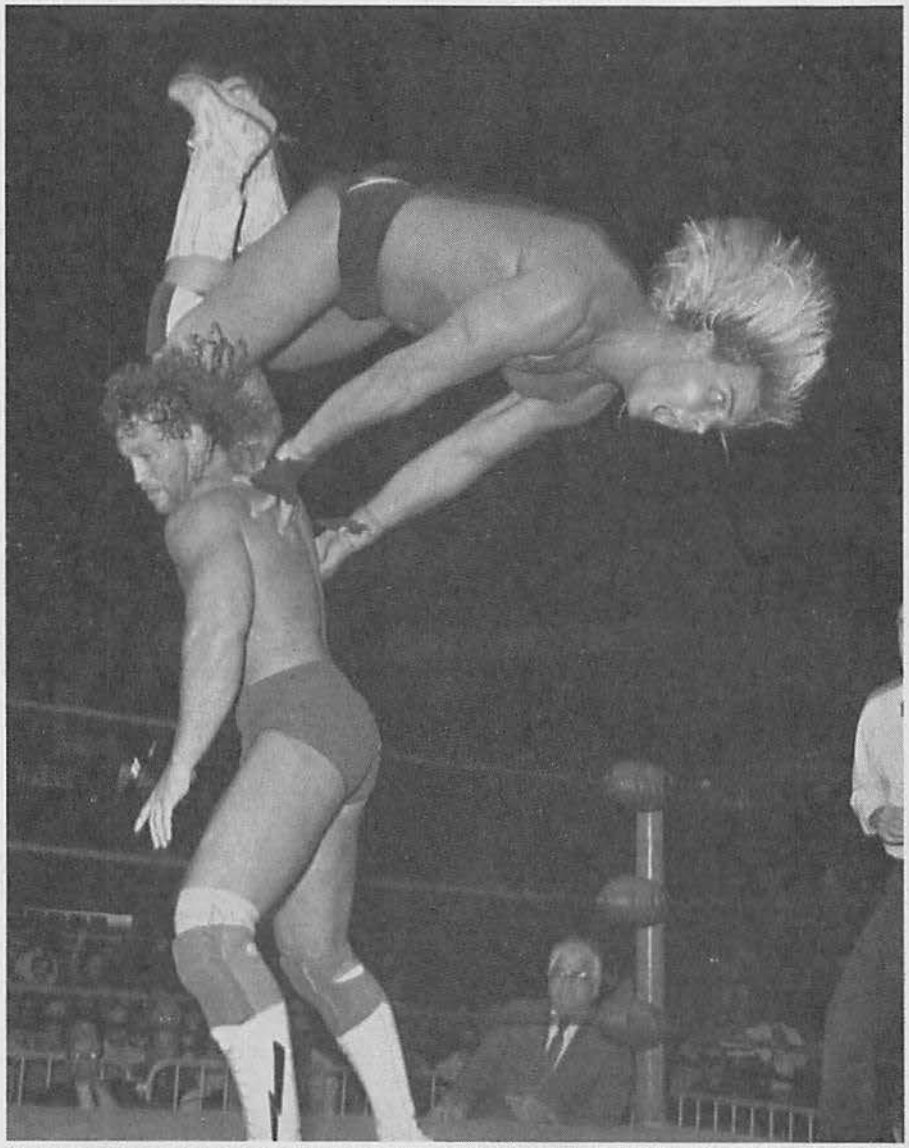
Road Warriors? **Animal**, **Hawk**, and **Paul Ellering** seem meaner and angrier than ever as they try to win the NWA World tag belts from **The Midnight Express**. "At this point, we'll do **anything** to win, no matter who we have to step over, beat up, or spit on," Animal said. "There's no good and bad in this. It's just **The Legion Of Doom** looking to get what it wants—at any and all costs."

The WWC Universal title, vacated when champion **Hercules Ayala** hit **Carlos Colon's** wife, will be filled in a three-night tournament set to take place October 15, November 23, and December 17. Scheduled to compete are **Chris Adams**, **Abdullah the Butcher**, **Ron Garvin**, **TNT**, **Eddie Gilbert**, **The Iron Sheik**, and Colon. Ayala has been banned from the tournament.

The AWA has taken over World Class' daily 4:00-5:00 p.m. slot on ESPN . . . **Brad Armstrong** left the NWA, presumably to wrestle in the Continental area . . . IWGP champion **Tatsumi Fujinami** is scheduled for a tour of the World Class, CWA, and AWA areas; Fujinami might also appear on the December 13 SuperClash III card in Chicago . . . **Kevin** and **Kerry Von Erich** be-



Brad Armstrong backflips Barry Windham. Armstrong has left the NWA for Continental, where he has wrestled with his father, Bob.

ware! **Super Black Ninja** has learned the Von Erichs' iron claw and plans to use it on them. Kevin recently returned to the ring after suffering from post-concussion syndrome.

The most surprising aspect of **Tully Blanchard** and **Arn Anderson's** arrival in the WWF was their decision to sign **Bobby Heenan** as their manager. It had initially been rumored that Tully and Arn, disgusted by their problems with **J.J. Dillon** in the NWA, would not take on a manager. But Heenan's track record of getting title matches for his men—he recently signed **King Haku** to a series against **Randy Savage**—probably weighed in his favor. Tully and Arn are now known as **The Brainbusters**.

Here's the card for the December 13 SuperClash III card in Chicago, as of press time: World Class champ **Kerry Von Erich** vs. AWA World champ **Jerry Lawler**; **Sgt. Slaughter** vs. **Col. DeBeers** in a boot camp match; WCCW Texas champ **Iceman Parsons** vs. **Brickhouse Brown**; **The Guerreros** vs. **The RPMs** and **Cactus Jack**; A 10-girl street-fight battle royal; **Jimmy Valiant** vs. **Jeff Jarrett**; and **The Top Guns** and **Wendi Richter** vs. **Bad Company** and **Madusa Miceli**. As an added attraction, promoters are negotiating a super-heavyweight battle royal in which all competitors will be over 300 pounds! Included will be **Abdullah the Butcher**, **Humongous**, former NFL and Dallas Cowboy great **Harvey Martin**, **Crusher Blackwell**, **Cousin Luke**, **The Avalanche**, and others.

Bam Bam Bigelow and **Terry "Bamm Bamm" Gordy** wrestled to a double-disqualification in the "Battle of the Bam Bams" in Chicago . . . **Ondi Austin** won the Windy Cities women's title from **Candi Devine** . . . **Chris Benoit** and **Lance Idol** are after the Stampede International tag belts held by **Jerry Morrow** and **The Cuban Assassins**, a.k.a. **The Cuban Commandos**.

That's all for now. See you at the matches! □

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(Continued from page 31)

of Windham as a wrestler since he joined The Four Horsemen?

STING: The *how many* Horsemen? The last time I looked, there were only *two* Horsemen, Craig. That stable's getting a litte thin, wouldn't you say? *(laughs)* Anyway, Windham has always been a championship-caliber wrestler, and during interviews he's developed a real talent for bragging about himself. He's big, strong, and knowledgeable. He's been able to counter some of my best maneuvers. But to me he shows a real lack of confidence.

RODRIGUEZ: Why do you say that?

STING: Because he keeps using those other two to get him out of trouble, and it's really embarrassing. I know I sound like a broken record about this stuff, but the whole Horsemen deal is getting really old, don't you think? I'm tired of it, the fans are tired of it, and I think the NWA officials have had a bellyful of 'em by now, too. It's time for the young lions like myself, Luger, and Nikita Koloff to claim the belts around here. If we can get all the belts away from Dillon, chances are he'll just shrivel up and fly away.

ROSENBAUM: It looks like Koloff may be busy with other things, though. He and his uncle, Ivan, have reconciled their family ties. They've vowed to rid wrestling of Paul Jones and his Russians.

STING: Isn't that great? I'm not the kind of guy who gets choked up about a lot of things, but when I saw Nikita and Ivan embrace on TV a few weeks ago, I had a lump in my throat the size of a California grapefruit. They say that blood is thicker than water, but *nothing* is thicker than Paul Jones. He's gonna find out that those Russian Assassin geeks of his are no match for the sheer power of two enraged Koloffs. I can't wait to see it happen!

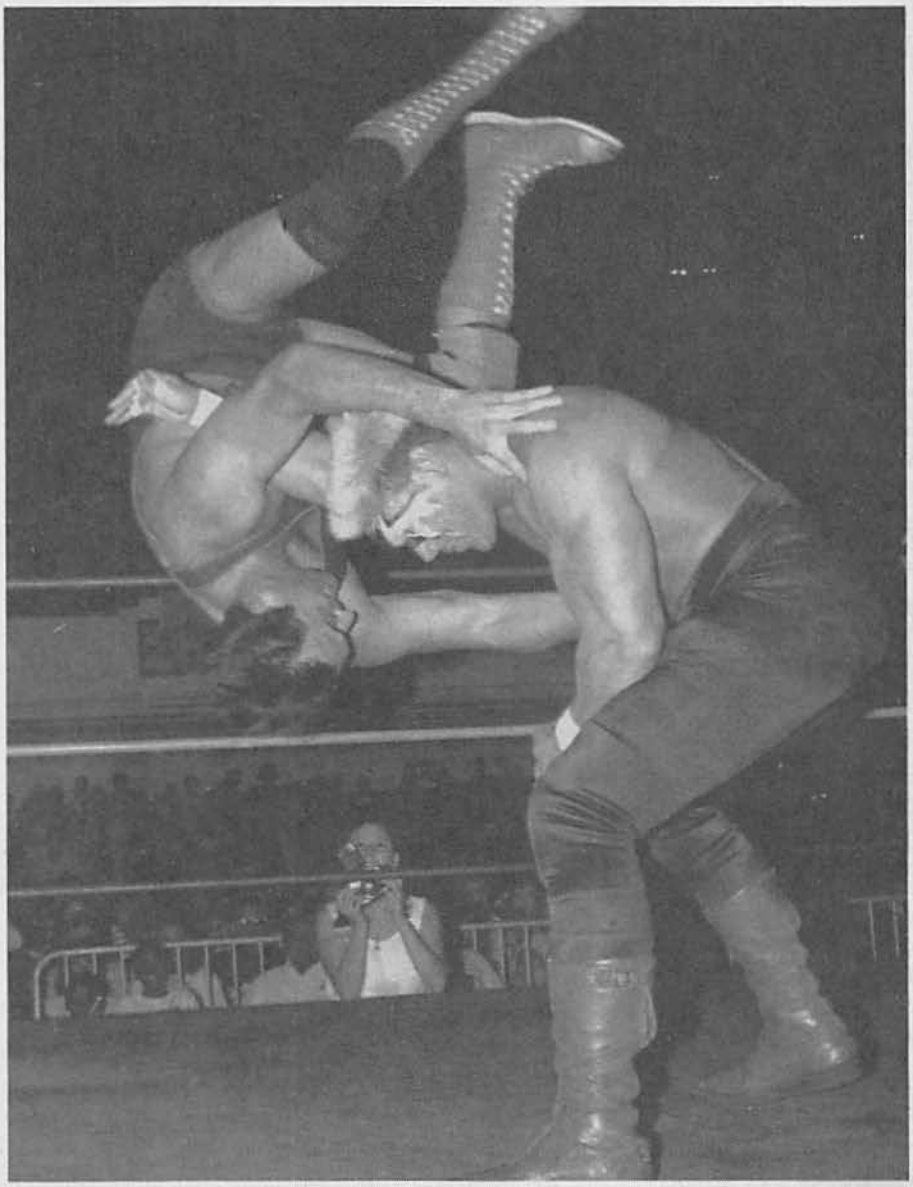
RODRIGUEZ: A lot of fans around the world can't wait to see you in action. We understand that you have a trip to Japan coming up.

STING: That's right, Andy. I figured that since my reputation has improved here in the U.S., I should give myself a taste of international competition. Then I'll *really* know if I'm truly a part of wrestling's elite circle, so to speak.

PETERS: Many fans here at home think *you* are overdue for entering the elite circle of NWA *champions.* Are you disappointed that you haven't won a major singles belt yet?

STING: Not really. I consider 1988 a very significant year in my development. How many guys as young as me have accomplished so much in such a short period of time? I'm very proud of what I've done so far, but I'm mature enough to be cautious about it. One thing that has ruined the careers of a lot of young wrestlers is patience, or, actually, the lack of it. Too many guys have gone too far too soon, and they burn out. Look at Tommy Rich, for example. Tommy is still a great wrestler, but back in 1981 he was the hottest thing going. He won the NWA title, but kept it for only a few days, and he never came close to winning it again. When *I* win the title, I'll keep it for a *long* time.

ROSENBAUM: You appear to covet



Sting flips Mike Rotundo. Because Rotundo is such a good scientific wrestler, Sting improves his own skills everytime he wrestles him. Sting wishes that Windham would wrestle more scientifically and not resort to such tactics as using a loaded glove.

the U.S. title more than the World title at this point in time.

STING: As funny as this may sound, that's true. I've developed a taste for the U.S. title. Nobody has really paid back Windham for turning against Lex Luger a few months ago, mainly because Lex has been busy trying to win the World title from Flair. But Barry's got to learn a very valuable lesson—you *never* turn away from your friends and the fans. He may think he's a big-time champion now, but I think I've figured him out.

RODRIGUEZ: Have you figured out that clawhold of his? He's managed to keep you at bay in several matches because of that devastating grip.

STING: That's because I'm firmly convinced he loads that black glove of his. Think about it—if he *really* has that kind of strength in his hands, why does he need that glove? It's only because he's got some kind of steel or wood or something near the fingers, *that's* why! When he puts it on me, the most painful part of my head isn't my temples, but my *forehead.* C'mon, Barry—you can do better than that! I'm really gonna be on the ref to check that thing out the next time we wrestle.

PETERS: Even though Windham has been effective with that hold, he hasn't been able to break your scorpion leglock in any of the matches between you.

STING: Never has, never will. I firmly believe that my leglock will *never* be broken by *anybody.* An added advantage for me are those big legs of Barry's, which make it even easier to apply once I wear him down. All I need now is the chance to get it on him in the center of the ring without anybody running in on me. But like I said before, I've got a plan to take care of that.

PETERS: Well, thank you for the interview, Sting, and good luck in winning the U.S. title.

STING: No sweat, boys. Just remember what I told you—my day is coming soon. If I can't beat Windham, I'm gonna beat Flair. That's a personal guarantee. *Owwwwwww!* □

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KEVIN VON ERICH

(Continued from page 45)

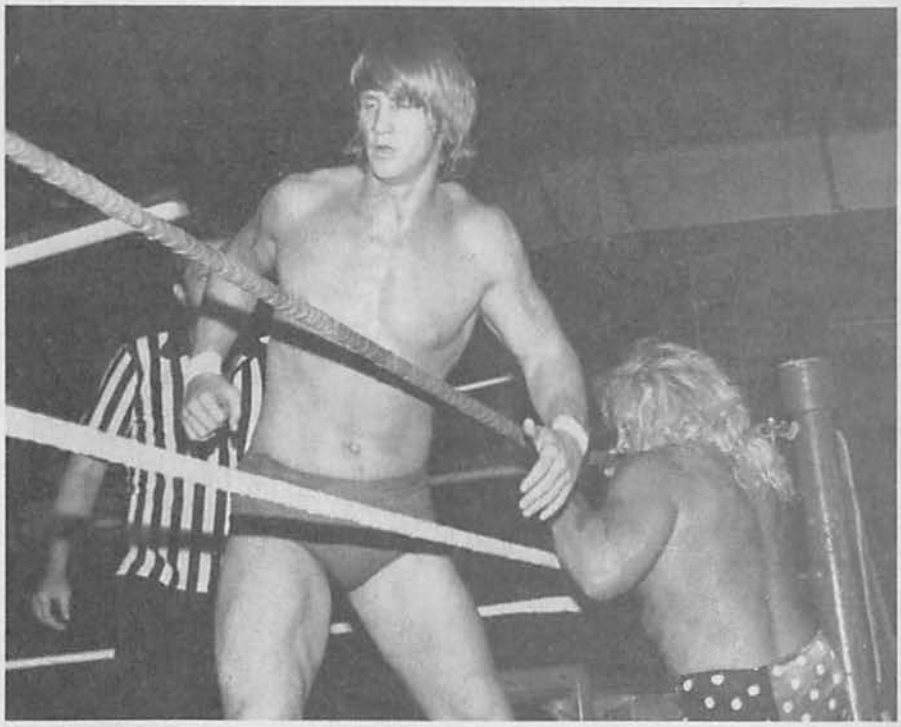
After Von Erich's grueling match in Cleveland, he began to feel nauseated and weak. Later on that evening, he checked himself into Cleveland's Southwest Suburban Hospital. The next day, he was transferred to Baylor Medical Center in Dallas, where he stayed until September 12. It was soon learned that Von Erich was suffering from post-concussion syndrome, a potentially dangerous affliction that causes loud ringing in the ears as well as a great deal of pain.

Von Erich's condition is not only threatening his career—it could possibly endanger his life. It was discovered that he had suffered a number of small concussions during his college football and pro wrestling careers. Additional blows to the head could send him back to the hospital once again.

"I had no idea he was sick," said a flustered Jean Simpkins of Dallas, a regular at Sportatorium cards. "Frankly, I thought he looked better than ever the past few months. But if he's not entirely healthy, he should stay away, at least for a while. Don't get me wrong—I'd love to see him wrestle again. But even legends have to call it quits sometime."

The Von Erich legend began when veteran Fritz Von Erich led sons Kevin, David, Kerry, and Mike into the World Class wrestling scene in the late '70s and early '80s. Texas wrestling would never be the same. Each member of this charismatic, talented family captured more than his share of titles and hearts. The Von Erichs and the fans were a match made in heaven.

Unfortunately, tragedy would strike. In 1984, David Von Erich died while on a tour of Japan. In 1987, Mike Von Erich committed suicide after a lengthy bout with illness. In 1986, Kerry Von Erich suffered a host of injuries as the result of a motorcycle accident.



Kevin Von Erich appears stunned after smashing Adrian Street into the ring apron. After this match in Cleveland, Kevin checked himself into a local hospital. He was suffering from post-concussion syndrome, a consequence of many grueling ring battles.

Kevin and Kerry battled back from these personal adversities to become better wrestlers than ever, and they both reached new heights during 1988. Kerry captured the World Class championship after recovering from his many injuries, Kevin won the Texas championship, and they both held the World Class tag team title.

Kevin is carried out of the ring on a stretcher. Fans who deeply care about Kevin don't want to see this scene repeated.

It had been a year of unparalleled glory—until late summer. A broken toe on Kevin's right foot led to the loss of his Texas title August 5 in Dallas. World Class officials allowed Kerry to substitute for his injured brother against Iceman Parsons, but the interference of Gen. Skandor Akbar gave Parsons an undeserved victory—and Kevin's belt.

After the toe healed, Von Erich seemed to be on the verge of winning back the Texas belt in several thrilling rematches against Parsons. Then Kevin's physical problems ground everything to a halt.

"I've *got* to come back," Von Erich said recently. "I have some big scores to settle with people like Akbar, Parsons, and Buddy Roberts. I can't let them ruin World Class for all the people I love out there."

That love has been reciprocated a million times over. The fans' concerns for Kevin were evident from the beginning of his illness. Cards, letters, and flowers flooded his Bay-

lor hospital room, even though no official announcement had been made about his injury.

"I've been following the Von Erichs ever since they started out," said 64-year-old Marge Grant, one of the many who sent flowers. "I've stood by them through all of their troubles. Now Kevin is injured, and they shouldn't allow him to come back if he's not at full strength. From what I understand, post-concussion syndrome is nothing to mess with."

There is the chance that with rest and the proper rehabilitation, Von Erich could return to wrestling with no loss of strength or ability. However, there is also the possibility that he could return and injure himself again, perhaps more severely. His fans are unanimous in demanding that Von Erich retire if there is *any* chance, however small, that he could suffer further damage.

"It happens to the best of 'em," explained Bollings. "Sandy Koufax was the greatest left-handed pitcher of all time, but his career was cut short because of arthritis. It would be no shame for Von Erich to quit if he's hurting, but it would be a tragedy if he stayed and did himself even more harm."

"I've got great memories of watching Kevin wrestle," said Simpkins, her eyes growing misty. "He's won the World Class title, the tag team title, and the six-man title. The man has done it all. Hey, *all* of Texas loves the Von Erichs, but we don't want any more tragedies. I'd rather have my happy memories of Kevin than more sad ones about the Von Erich family."

The fans have made their feelings clear. The next move is up to Kevin. At 30, he faces the most agonizing decision of his career, and the fans are praying that he makes the right choice. These loyal supporters have shared in all the joys and sorrows of the Von Erich family. They'd rather see him quit than see their cheers turn to tears once again. □

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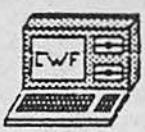

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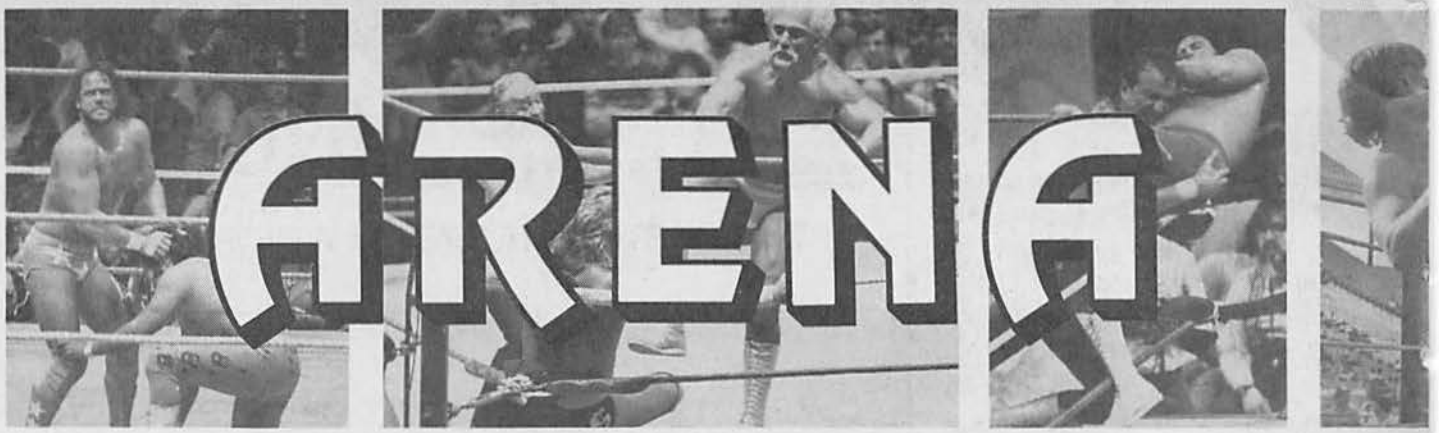


This special feature is for all fans who want to know who won and who lost . . . and how. *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will print eyewitness reports from correspondents who attend the matches. If you'd like to have your correspondent report printed in the world's largest-selling wrestling magazine, send it to: *Arena Report; PWI, Box 48; Rockville Centre, NY 11571.*

BALTIMORE ARENA (Baltimore): **Rick Morton**, **Brad Armstrong**, & **Ron Simmons** defeated **The Sheepherders** & **Larry Zbyszko** . . . **The Fantastics** downed **Russian Assassin I** & **Ivan Koloff** . . . **Nikita Koloff** thrashed **Rip Morgan** . . . **Steve Williams** lost to **Mike Rotundo** by disqualification . . . **Dick Murdoch** beat **Kevin Sullivan** by disqualification . . . **Sting** & **Dusty Rhodes** defeated **Barry Windham** & **Al Perez** when Sting pinned Perez . . . **The Midnight Express** wrestled to a double-disqualification with **Tully Blanchard** & **Arn Anderson** . . . **Lex Luger** defeated **Ric Flair** by disqualification.

—Rhoda Hall

BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL GYM (Burlington, IA): **D.J. Peterson** thrashed **Sandy Beach** . . . **The Hart Foundation** defeated **The Rougeau Brothers** . . . **Sherri Martel** beat **Rockin' Robin** . . . **Sam Houston** downed **Mike George** . . . **Don Muraco** defeated **Greg Valentine** by disqualification.

—James Kuster

CAPITAL CENTRE (Landover, MD): **Big Bossman** squashed **Jim Powers** . . . **Iron Mike Sharpe** pinned **Tommy Angel** . . . **Warlord** & **Barbarian** thrashed **The Bolsheviks** . . . **Brutus Beefcake** defeated **Ron Bass** by disqualification . . . **Jake Roberts** pinned **Rick Rude** . . . **Curt Hennig** beat **Jim Brunzell** . . . **King Haku** destroyed **Koko B. Ware** . . . **Hulk Hogan** pinned **Ted DiBiase**.

—Kimberly A. Murphy

CIVIC CENTER (Philadelphia): **Ron Simmons** pinned **Agent Steele** . . . **Rick Morton** defeated **Curtis Thompson** . . . **Nikita Koloff** defeated **Mike Rotundo** . . . **The Fantastics** & **Brad Armstrong** defeated **Rick Steiner**, **Larry Zbyszko**, & **Al Perez** . . . **The Road Warriors** destroyed **Russian Assassin I** & **Rip Morgan** . . . **Dusty Rhodes** defeated **Kevin Sullivan** in a dog collar chain match . . . **The Midnight Express** beat **Tully Blanchard** & **Arn Anderson** . . . **Ric Flair** downed **Lex Luger**.

—Billy Lallone

CIVIC CENTER (Peoria, IL): **Terry Taylor** pinned **Lanny Poffo** . . . **The Blue Blazer** crushed **Barry Horowitz** . . . **Jim Brunzell** lost to **Curt Hennig** . . . **Bad News Brown** pinned **Koko B. Ware** . . . **Hacksaw Duggan** defeated **Ted DiBiase** . . . Duggan (substituting for **Jake Roberts**) pinned **Rick Rude**.

—Josh Thurston

CYPRESS CENTRE (Medicine Hat, Alberta): **Beef Wellington** pinned **Goldie Rogers** . . . **Steve Blackman** destroyed **Gary Albright** . . . **Cowboy Lang** beat **Sky Low Low** in a midget match . . . **Bruce Hart** defeated **Johnny Smith** by countout . . . **Chris Benoit** & **Lance Idol** defeated **The Cuban Commandos** in a non-title match . . . **Makhan Singh** lost by disqualification to **Steve DiSalvo** when Albright interfered.

—Dwayne Soper

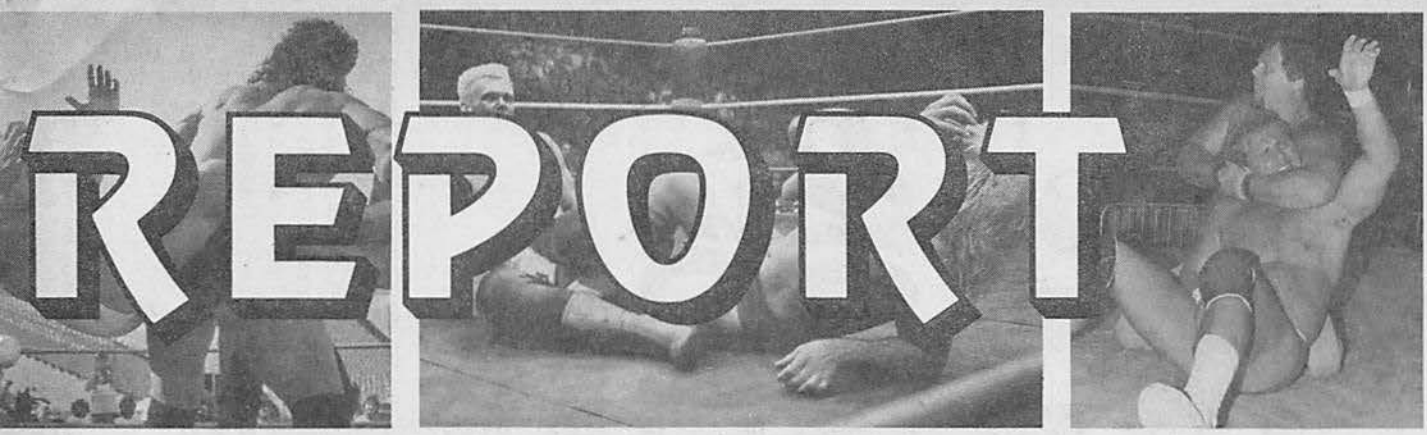
GREENSBORO COLISEUM (Greensboro, NC): **Mike Rotundo** & **Rick Steiner** defeated **The Italian Stallion** & **Brad Armstrong** . . . **Steve Williams** pinned **Rip Morgan** . . . **The Russian Assassins** defeated **Nikita Koloff** & **Rick Morton** by disqualification . . . **The Road Warriors** destroyed **The Sheepherders** . . . **Dusty Rhodes** beat **Al Perez** in a dog collar chain match . . . **The Midnight Express** beat **The Fantastics** . . . **Barry Windham** lost to **Sting** by disqualification . . . **Lex Luger** beat **Ric Flair** by disqualification.

—R.B. Smith Jr.

JOHNSON/HAGOOD STADIUM (Charleston, SC): **The Fantastics** defeated **Mike Rotundo** & **Rick Steiner** . . . **The Road Warriors** beat **The Midnight Express** in a non-title match . . . **Steve Williams** pinned **Rip Morgan** . . . **Lex Luger** & **Sting** defeated **Barry Windham** & **Ric Flair** by disqualification . . . **Nikita Koloff** beat **Russian Assassin I** by disqualification . . . **The Sheepherders** trounced **Italian Stallion** & **Curtis Thompson**.

—Russell Infinger

LOUISVILLE GARDENS (Louisville, KY): **Ricky Rice** & **John Paul** defeated **Terry Adonis** & **The Beast** . . . **Ron Garvin** pinned **Scott Steiner** . . . **Kerry Von Erich** pinned **Gary Young** . . . **Greg Gagne** beat **Mike Enos** . . . **Wendi Richter** & **Magnificent Mimi** defeated **Madusa Miceli** & **Sylvia** . . . **Bad Company** downed **Nature's Best** . . . **The Rock 'n' Roll Express** downed **Terry Adonis** & **The**



Hangman . . . **Iceman Parsons** lost to **Michael Hayes** by disqualification . . . **Steve Cox** pinned **Terry Garvin** . . . **Soldat Ustinov** & **Teijho Khan** defeated **Sgt. Slaughter** & **Keith Eric** when **Col. DeBeers** interfered . . . **Wahoo McDaniel** and **Manny Fernandez** battled to a double-countout . . . **Chavo, Hector,** & **Mando Guerrero** defeated **The Rock 'n' Roll RPMs** & **The Hangman** . . . **Col. DeBeers** destroyed **Alan Reynolds** . . . **The Samoan Swat Team** demolished **Shawn Baxter** & **Ray Odyssey** . . . **Jerry Lawler** pinned **Terry Adonis** . . . **Robert Fuller** & **Jimmy Golden** lost to **Bill Dundee** & **Brickhouse Brown** by disqualification . . . **Jeff Jarrett, The Rock 'n' Roll Express,** & **The Top Guns** beat **Cactus Jack Foley, Bad Company,** & **The Rock 'n' Roll RPMs** . . . **Kerry Von Erich** & **Michael Hayes** battled **Jerry Lawler** & **Jimmy Valiant** to a double-countout.

—Gary W. Durham

McLEAN COUNTY FAIR (Bloomington, IL): **El Bracero** pinned **LeRoy Redbone** . . . **Little Coco** pinned **Little Tokyo** . . . **Dick the Bruiser** & **Calypso Jim** downed **Jerry Graham Jr.** & **The Great Wojo** when Bruiser pinned Wojo . . . **Abdullah the Butcher** and **Jules Strongbow** battled to a double-countout . . . **Sgt. Slaughter** pinned **The Russian Assassin.**

—Tom Robey

MEMORIAL STADIUM (Newfoundland, Canada): **Frenchy Martin** pinned **Richard Charland** . . . **Lanny Poffo** beat **D.J. Peterson** . . . **Hillbilly Jim** defeated **Terry Taylor** . . . **Sherri Martel** pinned **Rockin' Robin** . . . **King Haku** lost to **Tito Santana** by disqualification . . . **Warlord** & **Barbarian** crushed **The Bolsheviks.**

—Bill Taylor

MERRITON COMMUNITY CENTRE (St. Catherine, Ontario): **Bad Company** defeated **The Top Guns** . . . **Greg Gagne** defeated **Jerry Lawler** by disqualification . . . **Wahoo McDaniel** defeated **Manny Fernandez** . . . **Sgt. Slaughter** pinned **Soldat Ustinov** . . . Slaughter also won a $10,000 battle royal.

—Mike Koros

THE OMNI (Atlanta): **Lex Luger** beat **Ric Flair** by disqualification . . . **Barry Windham** lost to **Sting** by disqualification . . . **Dusty Rhodes** destroyed **Kevin Sullivan** in a dog collar chain match . . . **The Midnight Express** defeated **The Fantastics** . . . **Russian Assassin I** beat **Ivan Koloff.**

—Patricia McGuire

PHILADELPHIA SPECTRUM (Philadelphia): **Barry Horowitz** pinned **D.J. Peterson** . . . **Curt Hennig** pinned **B. Brian Blair** . . . **Jim Powers** beat **Iron Mike Sharpe** . . . **Big Bossman** pinned **Ken Patera** . . . **The Hart Foundation** beat **Jacques** & **Raymond Rougeau** by disqualification . . . **Demolition** downed **The British Bulldogs** . . . **Bad News Brown** pinned **Junkyard Dog** . . . **Randy Savage** defeated **Ted DiBiase** in a steel cage match.

—Ken Marchesani

RICHMOND COLISEUM (Richmond, VA): **Dusty Rhodes** blasted **Russian Assassin I** . . . **Barry Windham** beat **Steve Williams** by countout . . . **Arn Anderson** & **Tully Blanchard** battled **The Midnight Express** to a double-countout . . . **Sting** demolished **Al Perez** . . . **The Road Warriors** beat **Mike Rotundo** & **Rick Steiner** . . . **Nikita Koloff, Brad Armstrong,** & **Rick Morton** defeated **The Sheepherders** & **Rip Morgan** . . . **Ron Simmons** wrestled to a draw against **Larry Zbyszko.**

—Chris Lane

SCURRY COUNTY COLISEUM (Snyder, TX): **Manuel Villalobos** and **Black Bart** wrestled to a draw . . . **The Beast** defeated **Steven Casey** . . . **Bill Irwin** beat **Jimmy Jack Funk** . . . **Steve Cox** & **Kendall Windham** downed **The Samoan Swat Team** . . . **Kerry Von Erich** pinned **Iceman Parsons.**

—Jimmie Sturdivant

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CENTER (White Plains, NY): **Paul Roma** pinned **Barry Horowitz** . . . **George Skaaland** pinned **Lanny Poffo** . . . **One Man Gang** squashed **Ken Patera** . . . **Hacksaw Duggan** defeated **Dino Bravo** . . . **The Rockers** outlasted **The Conquistadors.**

—Louis Amen

RECAP: **Dusty Rhodes** emerged as the clear winner of his bloody series of dog collar chain matches against **Al Perez** and **Kevin Sullivan** . . . Upset of the month: **Barry Horowitz** pinned former Central States champion **D.J. Peterson** in Philadelphia . . . **Sgt. Slaughter** has returned to the AWA; already he is embroiled in a violent feud with **Col. DeBeers** . . . **The Road Warriors** seem virtually unstoppable; can they ride this new wave of hostile momentum to the NWA World belts? . . . Former AWA World champion **Curt Hennig** is undefeated since joining the WWF . . . **Lex Luger** has captured a number of disqualification decisions over NWA World champion **Ric Flair,** but remains a pinfall away from capturing the title. □

VOLUME IX No. 11 NOVEMBER 1988

WRESTLING ENQUIRER

It's no more Mr. Nice Guy for The Road Warriors, who want immediate title shots.

THE ROAD WARRIORS: "NO MORE FRIENDS"

Turn Against Dusty Rhodes, Sting; Vow To Destroy Midnights

By BILL APTER

NORFOLK, VA—In a stunning development, The Road Warriors vowed to annihilate Sting, Dusty Rhodes, and anyone else who stands in their way on the road to the NWA World tag team championship.

"No more friends," said Road Warrior Animal. "From now on, the only people I'm counting on are Hawk and Paul [Ellering]. We've been in the NWA for three years, and everybody knows that we're the best tag team in the world. So how come I can count on my hands the number of title shots they've given us?"

"That's right!" screamed Hawk. "All this time we've been friends with Dusty Rhodes, but we've gotten *nothing*. Now all the fans are going wild over Sting like he was something new. Well, we've been painting our faces for years, and we can do more than he's *ever* done. And as for The Midnight Express, they're dead meat, brother. Their belts are ours."

"The Legion of Doom's" stunning attack on Rhodes and Sting should come as no surprise to longtime observers of the sport. The Warriors have been one of the most dangerous teams in wrestling since their 1983 debut, and have always had rulebreaking tendencies. Now they're frustrated by both their inability to win the World tag team belts and a lack of title shots.

"It was time for drastic measures," said manager Paul Ellering. "But let me point out that The Road Warriors haven't changed the way they're gonna wrestle. They've just changed their attitude. We're taking no prisoners."

Ronnie Garvin: "Suspend Lawler!"

By ANDY RODRIGUEZ

MEMPHIS, TN—Moments after AWA World champion Jerry Lawler was disqualified in his match against TV champ Ronnie Garvin for throwing fire, Garvin held an impromptu press conference and called for Lawler's suspension.

"I don't understand it," Garvin said. "What he did is not only against the rules, but was extremely dangerous. I have these burns on my chest, and he still has his World championship. But the thing that gets me the most is that

Ronnie Garvin doesn't think Jerry Lawler should be allowed to throw fire.

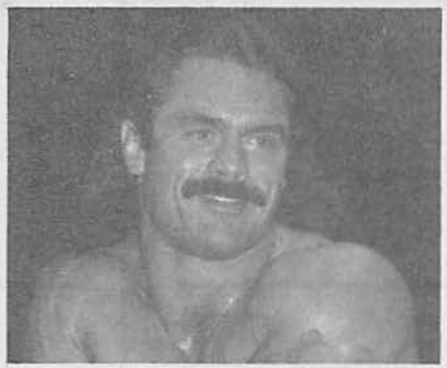
when Eddie Gilbert throws fire, he gets suspended. But Lawler is allowed to get away with it!"

Garvin was treated for the burns afterward while Lawler defended his actions.

"I don't think I have to apologize to a man like Ronnie Garvin for anything I do," said Lawler. "He's turned his back on the fans, he used a foreign object to win that belt of his, and he needed to be put in his place. Maybe this will make him think about what he's done."

Garvin, known as "Hands of Stone," says he isn't sure he wants a rematch against Lawler. "I'm not sure it's worth getting burned for," he said.

Rude-Santana Feud Imminent



Rick Rude

Tito Santana

By STU SAKS

FT. WAYNE, IN—Rick Rude had the tables turned on his "Rude Awakening" here following a match with Tito Santana, and now a hot feud looms between the WWF rivals.

After Santana and Rude battled to a 20-minute draw, Santana returned to the ring when Rude chose a woman from the audience to kiss. Tito dropkicked Rude through the ropes, grabbed the woman, and kissed her on the lips. Santana then stood over her and mockingly performed Rude's pelvic shake. Meanwhile, Rude and Heenan watched in horror at ringside.

This series of events capped a bad evening for Rude. Earlier that night, Rude was pinned by archrival Jake Roberts after Roberts' wife Cheryl slapped him and spit in his face.

But it now appears that the Rude-Roberts feud might be drawing to a close. Roberts has effectively gained revenge on Rude for his advances on Cheryl and is looking to take the next step toward the World or Intercontinental title.

Paul E., Hogan Can't Come To Terms

By BOB SMITH

CHICAGO—Manager Paul E. Dangerously and former WWF World champion Hulk Hogan had a planned but unannounced meeting at the Raddison Suite Hotel at Chicago Airport. According to *Wrestling Enquirer* sources, however, the meeting ended without an agreement.

The purpose of the meeting remains unclear, but Dangerously became disgusted after 15 minutes and walked away from Hogan.

"What the hell do I need him for?" Dangerously said later. "He doesn't even have a title anymore. I told him how I could get it for him, but, of course, he didn't want to listen."

Dangerously is still upset over Eddie Gilbert's decision to go to the NWA alone and said he now plans to go elsewhere on his own.

"If Gilbert thinks he doesn't need me, after all I've done for him, he's damn wrong," said Dangerously. "I'm gonna do something that's gonna make Gilbert wish he'd never left me."

There have been confirmed reports that Dangerously is negotiating with the WWF.

AROUND THE GLOBE

MOSCOW, RUSSIA

Ivan Koloff has been officially reprimanded by Soviet sports officials here following his decision to reunite with his nephew Nikita. The younger Koloff was reprimanded two years ago after deciding to wrestle in Magnum T.A.'s honor. "This is a reprehensible action," read the translation of a telegram received by Ivan. "You have been warned several times that your fight must be with the people and not with your condemned former nephew. If your actions continue, you risk permanent exile from the Soviet Union."

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

Former WWC Universal champion Hercules Ayala, banned from the three-night tournament for the vacant title for his attack on Carlos Colon's wife, told *Wrestling Enquirer* that he is considering a lawsuit against WWC officials. "They might have a right to take that belt away from me, but they have no right to keep me from entering the tournament," Ayala said. "The WWC officials are doing everything they can to make sure that their hero Colon wins the title, even though he doesn't deserve it. They are denying the true champion."

TOKYO, JAPAN

Danny Spivey and Johnny Ace are among the teams entered for All-Japan's upcoming tag team tournament, scheduled for late November here. Stan Hansen and Terry Gordy, Tiger Mask and Jimmy Snuka, Abdullah the Butcher and Tiger Jeet Singh, and All-Japan International tag team champs Jumbo Tsuruta and Yoshiaki Yatsu are also expected to compete.

THE *PWI* POLL

Each month, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* will conduct a poll on a controversial issue in the sport today. The results present a multifaceted view of public opinion that offers valuable insights into the views of your fellow fans

THE SUBJECT: THE KOLOFF CONNECTION

IN RUSSIAN THERE'S an axiom similar to one in English: *Kroff tolche vodi*. Translated, this means, "blood is thicker than water." It's an old folk saying that's gaining more and more meaning for Ivan and Nikita Koloff.

September 7 may not be Pearl Harbor day, but for Ivan Koloff, September 7 will certainly live in infamy. It was on that day at The Clash Of Champions III in Albany, Georgia, that Ivan was betrayed—and brutally beaten—by his ex-manager Paul Jones and former friends The Russian Assassins.

At the close of his Russian chain match against Rick Morton, Ivan found himself receiving the punches of his manager and countrymen. Then, bolting rapidly from the dressing room, Ivan's nephew—and longtime adversary—rushed to the ring. Had Nikita opted to forget the past in favor of the *kroff tolche vodi*? Had Ivan found a new ally?

Not really.

As the fans cheered Nikita and Ivan looked hopeful, it became obvious that the younger Koloff had rushed to the ring only to save his friend Rick Morton. The re-unification of the Koloffs would have to wait.

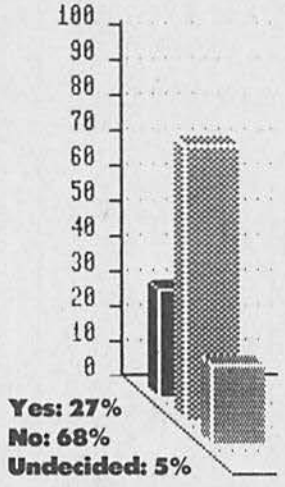
That unification did occur the next week in Fayetteville, North Carolina, as Nikita defended Ivan from another attack by The Russian Assassins and extended a hand of friendship and family to his uncle, who accepted.

The incident brings forth many questions. First, should Nikita trust Ivan? After all, until only recently, Ivan was a vicious and proud member of Paul Jones' army. Then again, should *Ivan* trust *Nikita*? They are from different generations. In Russia, more than in any other country, internal change occurs not between ethnic groups or classes, but between generations. Can Ivan trust his nephew, the Russian with American values?

The results of our poll (based on 1,000 random calls to *PWI* subscribers; statistical margin of error plus or minus three percent) indicate that while Ivan should be able to trust Nikita, Nikita should be wary of trusting Ivan. The response to a follow-up question, "Should the *fans* trust Ivan?" resulted in a resounding "No!"

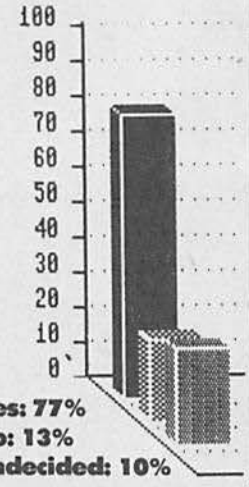
Nonetheless, most fans believe that if the new Koloff tag team survives (and most feel it won't), they should have no problem beating the Assassins; 67 percent felt confident of a Koloff victory. A relatively large "undecided" response to the question "Should Nikita have saved Ivan at The Clash?" (21 percent) indicates how wary the fans are of Ivan's turn to good. □

Should Nikita trust Ivan?



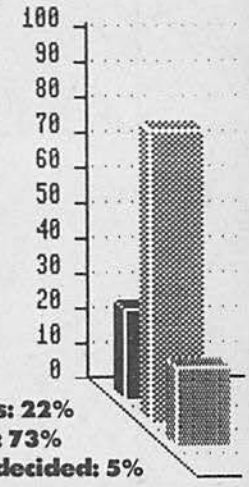
Yes: 27%
No: 68%
Undecided: 5%

Should Ivan trust Nikita?



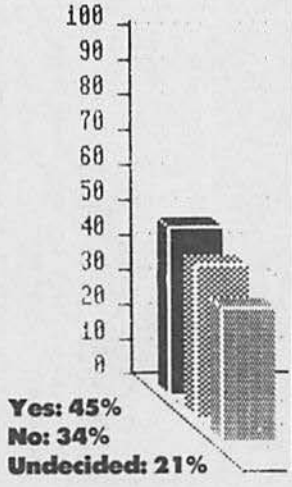
Yes: 77%
No: 13%
Undecided: 10%

Should the fans trust Ivan?



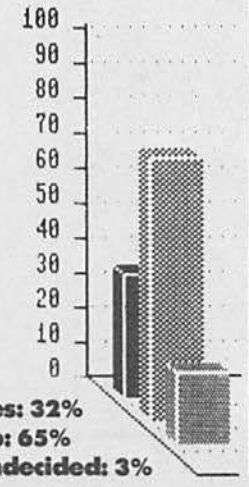
Yes: 22%
No: 73%
Undecided: 5%

Should Nikita have saved Ivan at The Clash Of Champions?



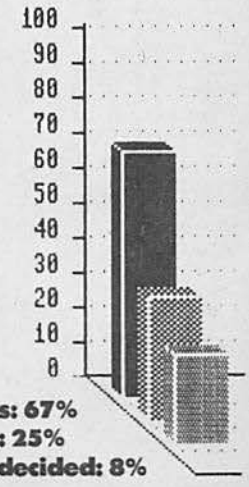
Yes: 45%
No: 34%
Undecided: 21%

Will Nikita and Ivan be able to put aside their past and wrestle as a team?



Yes: 32%
No: 65%
Undecided: 3%

Could that tag team beat The Russian Assassins?



Yes: 67%
No: 25%
Undecided: 8%

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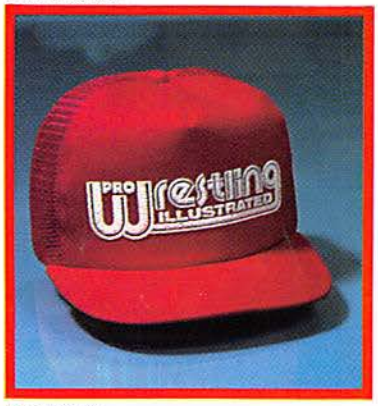
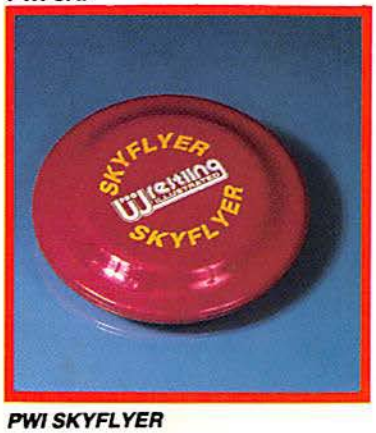


PWI CAP



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	5479	Adrian Adonis		5603	Rick Martel
	5449	Harley Race		5421	"New" Tito Santana (not pictured)
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